



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Timothy W. Monville
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: April 11, 2022
Person Contacted: Jorge Echegoyen
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20LA202

Narrative:

FAA Inspector Jorge Echegoyen contacted NTSB by phone on June 2, 2020, at 1604 EDT. He called from [REDACTED]

He indicated that the airplane was departing from runway 9, and crashed into a channel north of the airport very close to the runway. The airplane was submerged in 20 ft of water, which is very murky and very difficult to recover. There were 3 occupants; 2 were fatal. The survivor is in the hospital.

A witness reported that the airplane had been on the ground a long time and seldom flew. The purpose of the flight was a test flight with 2 avionics technicians on-board. The pilot aborted the 1st takeoff because of an issue with the left engine. The pilot restarted the left engine and taxied to the ramp where a short run-up was performed. During the accident flight, the airplane climbed to between 250 and 300 ft and drifted left. While at about 100 ft over the channel, the airplane stalled. There was no smoke trailing the airplane.

The pilot was seen struggling in pitch. He would like to talk with the survivor¹.

Inspector Echegoyen was asked about fueling and any security video and he advised he would follow up. He provided names for the occupants and indicated that the airplane would be recovered the following day.

Inspector Echegoyen contacted NTSB the same day at 1702 EDT, from the same phone number and advised that the airplane was fueled and he will get a statement from the fueler. He indicated

¹ Refer to NTSB Record of Conversation with the passenger contained in the NTSB public docket for the investigation.

that as the airplane was descending, it contacted the masts of 2 sailboats in the channel, but there were no ground injuries.

The pilot was the Director of Operations for Vieques Air Link, who owns Isla Nena. He will be inspecting their facility on June 3, 2020.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call.



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Narrative:

FAA Inspector Jorge Echegoyen was contacted by phone on June 4, 2020, at 1103 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

He indicated that he took pictures of the fuel truck and truck logs. The inboard fuel tanks were topped off on the day of the accident at 1133 adding 47.5 gallons of 100 low lead fuel. The inboard and outboard fuel tanks each have a total capacity of 36 gallons. The pilot aborted the 1st takeoff attempt and the fueller reported that he saw the pilot trying to start the left engine after taxiing off the runway. The same fuel truck fueled a Brittan Norman Islander at 1111, N863VL, that is operated by Vieques Air Link. The airplane flew after fueling with no fuel related discrepancies. He will request a copy of the flight log page for the airplane.

He also has a video from a camera facing northeast. It appears the gear is either down or in transit, though an eyewitness reported the landing gear was down the entire flight.

No person from maintenance checked the left engine after the aborted takeoff. He also has a video of the airplane exiting the runway after the 1st aborted takeoff.

The purpose of the flight was testing of avionics equipment. Both the right front seat occupant (survivor) and rear seat occupant (fatal) worked on the installation.

Isla Nena Air Services, Inc., Air Carrier Certificate Number is 2ISA737P.

The airplane was equipped with normally aspirated engines. The insurance adjuster is Ted Lawton.

The airplane was at a facility next to the airport and 3/4 mile away. It is locked inside an old hangar (15).

Inspector Echegoyen contacted NTSB the same day at 1536 EDT, and advised that he intended to inspect the engines tomorrow.

He spoke with a co-worker of the surviving passenger who spoke with the passenger during a lucid moment. It was relayed that during the 1st takeoff attempt while rolling down the runway, the pilot experienced a loss of directional control. He (pilot) thought the issue was related to a flat tire, and exited the runway with the left engine running. The control tower asked the pilot if he needed any assistance, and the left engine quit. The pilot was able to restart it, then the right front seat passenger exited the airplane and inspected the tires and got back into the airplane. At rotation of the accident flight, the airplane was drifting to the left and the pilot tried to retract the landing gear. The next thing he saw was water and he lost consciousness.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call.



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Narrative:

FAA Inspector Jorge Echegoyen was contacted by phone on June 4, 2020, at 1202 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

He indicated that he contacted the Director of Maintenance for Vieques Air Link and the planned engine inspection was for June 5, 2020.

He indicated that the left engine quit during the 1st takeoff and the pilot was able to restart it while taxiing. The pilot then taxied to the ramp where he performed an engine run-up.

Larry Creque is Isla Nena's and Vieques Air Link's Director of Maintenance.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call.



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Date: April 11, 2022
Person Contacted: Jorge Echegoyen
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20LA202

Narrative:

FAA Inspector Jorge Echegoyen contacted NTSB by phone on June 5, 2020, at 0933 EDT. He called from [REDACTED]

He provided a cell phone number for Larry Creque of [REDACTED] but added that he was not present during recovery of the wreckage. They can apply LPS3 to the cylinders to prevent any further corrosion. As part of the airplane recovery, people drained both engine oil sumps into 1 container. An engine run is not possible for either engine due to damage to both propellers. As part of the investigation he will put the JPI EDM 960 into fresh water for shipping to NTSB for read-out. He will:

1. Rinse the exterior of both engines
2. Fill each crankcase with diesel
3. Check the lower spark plugs and lube each cylinder
4. Put lubricant into each magneto
5. Will check all fuel hoses by hand to verify they are tight
6. Visual inspect both engines for obvious damage

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call.



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Date: April 11, 2022
Person Contacted: Jorge Echegoyen
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20LA202

Narrative:

FAA Inspector Jorge Echegoyen contacted NTSB by phone on June 5, 2020, at 1500 EDT. He called from [REDACTED]

He indicated that they started with the right engine and removed the bottom spark plugs to allow the cylinders to drain. They lubricated each cylinder and verified the magnetos are Bendix. With respect to the left engine, all fuel lines were tight. He took pictures and videos of his inspection. He did inspect the cockpit and noted:

Both auxiliary fuel pump switches - were in the off position.
Both magneto Switches – Were in the both position
Landing gear selector – down position

The right flap appeared retracted. He had not yet put the JPI EDM 960 in water. He plans to begin with the left engine in about 15 to 20 minutes.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call.



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Date: April 11, 2022
Person Contacted: Jorge Echegoyen
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20LA202

Narrative:

FAA Inspector Jorge Echegoyen was contacted by phone on June 8, 2020, at 1204 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

He indicated that he accessed the fuel selectors by removing the right front seat. The following positions were noted:

Left Engine – Outboard fuel tank locked in position
Right Engine – Inboard fuel tank locked in position
Crossfeed Valve - Open

The following fuel boost pump switch positions were noted:

Left Auxiliary fuel pump – Off
Right Auxiliary fuel pump – Off

He asked the Isla Neva Director of Maintenance about the left outboard fuel tank and he said they seldom fuel the outboard fuel tanks.

The bottom spark plugs of the Nos, 1, 5 and 6 cylinders were white in color consistent with lean fuel to air ratio.

The left wing spar fractured on water contact but remained connected by the control cables. The salvage facility crew had to cut the control cables to separate the wing.

The right engine was not equipped with a hydraulic pump.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call.



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Date: April 11, 2022
Person Contacted: Jorge Echegoyen
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20LA202

Narrative:

FAA Inspector Jorge Echegoyen contacted NTSB by phone on June 10, 2020, at 1651 EDT. He was called at [REDACTED]

An inspection of the airframe and both engines was performed on June 10 thru June 12, 2020, by a representative of the airframe manufacturer with oversight from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Inspector Echegoyen advised that rudder flight control continuity was confirmed for yaw, pitch and roll; the left aileron control cables were cut to separate the wing during recovery. The right aileron pushrod and 1 bellcrank arm were fractured consistent with impact with no evidence of preimpact failure or malfunction.

The Piper representative has the following:

1. Stab Trim measurement
2. Flap actuator measurement
3. Rudder trim measurement

They looked at the left fuel supply system and the fuel selector cable was separated from the arm at the valve consistent with the wing fracture at water impact. That separation pulled the selector to the inboard tank position. They inspected the left airframe fuel strainer bowl and it did not contain any fuel. They did see salt residue, the screen was clean. The fuel selector was inspected and no obstructions were noted thru the valve; it was noted to operate satisfactory.

On June 12th, they plan to raise the engine with a forklift to inspect it.

They did find a Garmin 696 GPS that they will retain.

On June 11, 2020, an interview of the right front seat passenger was scheduled at 0900; NTSB will participate by phone. The passenger sustained a broken ankle, and pelvis.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Eastern Region

Date: June 11, 2020
Person Contacted: Raymond Chaparro Lorenzo
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20LA202

Narrative:

Mr. Raymond Chaparro Lorenzo was contacted by phone on June 11, 2020, at 0909 Atlantic standard time. He was called by FAA inspector Jorge Echegoyen using cellular phone [REDACTED]. Also present on the call was FAA inspector William Melendez. Mr. Chaparro 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 was lightly medicated and was only taking Acetaminophen for pain management. He was clear headed for the interview. He has been an avionics inspector for Caribbean Avionics for the past 3 years, and before that worked 4 to 5 years for Ecolift in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He holds a private pilot certificate with airplane single engine land rating and has about 100 hours total time. He has flown in a general aviation multi-engine airplane.

Had he prior to the accident flight flown in that airplane?

He indicated that he had 3 to 4 months ago during a test of the ADS-B that was installed. It was a 30-minute flight to obtain the FAA ADS-B report. On that flight there were no issues and he believed the pilot of that flight was the same pilot as the accident flight.

He was asked to provide without interruption information regarding the accident flight. He arrived at the hangar and found a Vieques Air Link mechanic named Larry working on the airplane. Specifically, he was working on lubricating the left propeller governor. He indicated that the flight was proposed to be at 1030 which was for HSI calibration, but at 1040 when the

pilot was not there, he called him. The pilot arrived about 1100. After engine start the pilot taxied to the runway where he performed an engine run-up and check the controls with no discrepancies reported. He held short of the runway and was cleared for takeoff and the pilot taxied onto the runway and aligned the airplane. He added full power, but the airplane abruptly yawed to the left. The pilot aborted the takeoff, and the tower controller who noted the left yaw asked the pilot if he needed any assistance. The pilot told the tower that he did not and was taxiing to the ramp to check a few things. He asked the pilot what would cause the left yaw and he said it was from the left landing gear strut having less nitrogen than the right strut. He added that he had flown with the pilot many times. While taxiing off the runway the left engine which was at idle power quit and “[shut] down.” The pilot continued off the runway and had a hard time re-starting the left engine and he cranked more than 2 or 3 times by cutting the mixture and applying it back again. He added that he did get it restarted and taxied to the ramp. At the ramp, the pilot asked him to exit the airplane to check the main landing gear struts, and he found the opposite of what the pilot had told him. He noted that the left strut had more volume of nitrogen than the right. He told the pilot what he saw and he was told to get back into the airplane which was on the Million Air/Signature’s ramp because he (pilot) wanted to perform an engine run-up, which included a check of the magnetos and cycling of the propeller. He added that he did not notice any “red flags”, but one factor that could have affected his ability to hear any irregular engine noise was that he was wearing a Light Speed Zulu noise cancelling headset which are great at, “eliminating outside noise and engine noise.”

After the run-up he taxied to the runway where after applying full power the airplane “yawed abruptly to the left again but this time Luis the pilot corrected immediately he applied right rudder, yoke to the right and back pressure like in [a] crosswind soft field takeoff.” He continued the takeoff and got airborne pretty fast with the pilot “fighting the airplane to get it centered.” When he looked down he noted the airplane was left of the runway and was not climbing at a normal rate of climb. He estimated it was climbing around 100 feet-per-minute. The left engine was not producing full power. He looked at the pilot and saw that he was looking at the instruments to see what was wrong with the airplane and that is when the pilot grabbed the landing gear selector and pulled it up but he was not sure if it retracted but he never saw three green lights. At that time he realized “things were going to get ugly or we were going to the water”, and he noticed the airplane turning to the left. He looked back to see the other mechanic (Sammuel) was wearing the seatbelt, and told him to prepare for landing. He reported that the pilot who was nervous was turning left as if to perform a 180° turn but after looking forward at that exact moment the airplane impacted the water while in a nose down attitude. He lost consciousness and when he “woke up”, or regained consciousness, the water level was to his chest. He “tried and tried to open the door” but was unable. He took his last breath and when submerged with the airplane, he moved his right arm and noticed the door was open. He proceeded out of the airplane and grabbed onto the tail which only the part of the airplane that was above water until the airplane sank. He was screaming for help, and a person who was in a boat jumped into the water with his paddle board and swam towards him while the person on the paddle board came towards him. He grabbed onto the back of the paddle board and was towed to the person’s boat. He held onto the boat’s ladder but his back injury precluded him boarding the boat. He remained in the water until the police boat arrived and he was placed into their boat onto a stretcher. He added that the airplane quickly descended.

NTSB Questions -

Please explain what maintenance was being done to the left propeller governor.

He indicated that because of a complaint by a pilot, the left propeller control cable was being lubricated.

Did he witness a preflight inspection of the airplane?

He did not witness a preflight being performed. He did see a fuel truck parked in front of the airplane, and during takeoff noted the fuel tanks were full.

Did he recall an engine run-up before the 1st takeoff attempt?

He did not recall.

During the 1st takeoff attempt how soon after full power was applied did the airplane yaw?

He indicated that it yawed immediately to which the pilot aborted the takeoff.

Did the pilot attribute the yaw during the 1st takeoff as to being caused by the left main landing gear strut low pressure?

Yes.

When did the left engine quit?

When the airplane was exiting the runway. The pilot tried to restart the left engine, and did not recall when that occurred but when the airplane was entering Millionaire's ramp he noted both engines were operating.

While at the ramp did he get out of the airplane?

He did get out and inspected both main landing gear struts.

Did he recall the strut extensions for the left and right?

The left had about 6 to 7 inches of strut exposed, while the right had about 1 inch exposed.

How was the engine run-up while at the ramp?

There was no backfire. The pilot checked the magnetos and propellers and everything "worked well."

During the run-up did the pilot check or cycle the propeller controls?

The pilot did move the blue propeller control and although he could not recall the exact number of times, thought they were exercised 2 to 3 times each.

Did the pilot verbalize why he thought the left engine quit?

He did not say why he thought it quit but he was not too concerned because it occurred when the left engine was at idle power setting.

NTSB Questions Continued -

During the 2nd takeoff when did the airplane yaw to the left?

It yawed to the left immediately after full power was applied. The pilot responded by adding right rudder pedal input and aft control yoke. The airplane went left of the runway centerline, and the left engine was not developing full power.

Did he notice the readings of the engine monitor?

He did not. He did see while climbing that the airplane was full of fuel.

Did he hear any sounds from the left engine?

He did not.

How did the pilot attempt to retract the landing gear?

Because the airplane was only climbing about 100 feet-per-minute, he grabbed the normal landing gear selector and placed it to the retracted position to clean up the airplane for less drag. At that moment the flight was at the departure end of the runway, at an altitude of no more than 200 to 300 ft above ground level.

Was there any problem with the landing gear retracting?

He did not notice 3 green lights, and less than 5 seconds later the airplane impacted the water.

Did the pilot move either propeller control lever during the 2nd takeoff?

No. He did not notice him changing the propeller controls.

FAA Questions -

Did he recall the pilot using a checklist?

“No he was not using a checklist.”

Did the pilot brief him before taxiing regarding emergency procedures?

No he did not.

Did he notice the position of the fuel selectors or was he familiar with the fuel selectors for that airplane?

He was not familiar with that airplane’s fuel selector valves and did not know their location or position.

Did he recall position of switches for the 1st or 2nd takeoff?

He did not recall.

NTSB Follow-Up Questions -

Was he wearing a seatbelt and shoulder harness?

He was wearing both, and at impact had his hand on the release lever. It was tightly secured.

NTSB Follow-Up Questions Continued -

On the 1st takeoff attempt or 2nd takeoff, did he attribute the left yaw to be associated with an engine malfunction?

He did.

After the 1st takeoff attempt or during the 2nd takeoff did either he or the rear seat occupant tell the pilot that the airplane should be checked further?

No.

On either the 1st takeoff attempt or 2nd takeoff did he perceive any sounds associated with the left engine?

He did not notice any backfire.

Did he recall the airspeed during the 2nd takeoff attempt?

He did not, but the airplane was flying “really really slow.”

Was he willing to make a written statement?

He was willing. He was informed to please put down facts as soon as possible before he forgets them.

Was there anything that hasn't been asked that we need to know?

No. He added that he had flown with the accident pilot many times with Vieques Air Link and trusted him.

The call ended at 0947 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to him for review on June 11, 2020. He replied on June 12, 2020, at 1531 EDT, with, “Hello, I received the email with the attachment. I am having a hard time writing my statement because of my injuries, I can barely use my cellphone for a couple minutes.” On September 15, 2020, at 1111 EDT, he provided a typed narrative that was incorporated into the digest. The corrected digest was e-mailed to him on April 2, 2021.



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FAA Inspector Jorge Echegoyen contacted NTSB by phone on June 11, 2020, at 1523 EDT. He called from [REDACTED] Also present was the Piper investigator Jon Hirsch.

Inspector Echegoyen indicated that they were performing an inspection of the left engine. Crankshaft, camshaft, and valve train continuity was confirmed. Both magnetos were tightly secured to the engine but the magneto to engine timing was not confirmed. Each magneto was rotated using a cordless drill and produced spark at all towers. The fuel lines in the left engine compartment were checked and residual 100 low lead fuel were noted in all lines. They planned to inspect the fuel vent system. The electrically checked the left auxiliary fuel pump and it operated. They will also inspect the left propeller governor. They removed the left engine-driven fuel pump and took it apart noting there were drops of fuel inside and the diaphragm were ok.

The throttle linkage at the servo fuel injector was fractured. It seemed like it was corroded but the mode of fracture was hard to tell¹. The manifold or distributor valve was disassembled and it appeared ok. They could not see through 3 fuel injectors.

He has pictures of the spark plugs and will provide.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call.

¹ Refer to NTSB Materials Laboratory Factual Report contained in the NTSB public docket for the investigation.



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FAA Inspector Jorge Echegoyen contacted NTSB by phone on June 12, 2020, at 1102 EDT. He called from [REDACTED] Also present was the Piper investigator Jon Hirsch.

Inspector Echegoyen indicated that he has retained the left servo fuel injector, left auxiliary fuel pump, flexible fuel hoses from the firewall to the manifold valve, and the fuel flow transducer. All hard and flexible fuel lines from the airframe fuel strainer to the engine were tactically checked for the left engine and all were tight. He indicated that the pilot was Chief Pilot for Vieques Air Link. He found his pilot certificates, and also some small plastic pills that he will secure.

The following hard aluminum fuel carrying lines were noted:

- To the fuel selector inlet
- Fuel selector outlet to the auxiliary fuel pump
- Boost pump outlet to the firewall fitting

He will confirm the hard lines are free of obstructions.

The call end time was not recorded.

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Narrative:

FAA Inspector Jorge Echegoyen contacted NTSB by phone on June 12, 2020, at 1506 EDT. He called from [REDACTED]. Also present was the Piper investigator Jon Hirsch.

Inspector Echegoyen indicated that all remaining inspection items have been completed. They will borescope the cylinders of all engines. The left inboard and outboard fuel tank vents were free of obstructions. All left engine flexible hoses from the firewall forward were retained for NTSB.

With respect to the right engine, crankshaft, camshaft, and valve continuity was confirmed. Thumb suction and compression was noted in 4 of the 6 cylinders. The other 2 cylinders had leakage past the exhaust valves. The magneto to engine timing was correct.

The engine controls from the cockpit to the left engine was confirmed, except where previously noted at the servo fuel injector connection. He confirmed the left fuel selector valve was in the outboard position, and the crossfeed valve was on.

He confirmed that the inboard fuel tanks were topped off a few days before and he has a Record of Conversation with the fueler.

The call end time was not recorded.

The digest was reviewed with him during the call.