

Ryan Enders
Aviation Accident Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: May 28, 2024
Subject: ERA24LA229 First Passenger Interview
Contact: Daniel Voelker

Daniel was contacted via telephone at [REDACTED] to discuss his flight in the accident airplane with the accident pilot. This was the flight previous to the accident flight. The following is a summary of that conversation:

Daniel was asked what the purpose of the flight was, and he responded that it "joyride" in the bi-plane with himself and his girlfriend, Elizabeth (Liz). He rode first with Mark (the pilot) and everything was fine. The engine sounded great, and it was a good day. When it was Elizabeth's turn, he watched them take off, make a right-hand turn, and soon after they made a 180° turn to come back to the airport. Daniel stated he saw them lose altitude and that they went behind trees in the field so he could not see them. He then saw a puff of dust and heard a "thud". Daniel called over to the airport manager and they drove to the accident location. Daniel stated that he called 911 on the way over and when they arrived, someone was already there assisting. He gave his phone to the airport manager to provide better directions for emergency personnel.

Daniel stated that they help remove the pilot first because he was in a critical state and then they helped remove Elizabeth. A discussion about her status and where she was transported to occurred. Daniel stated that she doesn't have a lot of memory of the accident and what she does remember is "fuzzy".

Daniel provided Elizabeth's phone number of [REDACTED]. He stated that she was in the front seat of the airplane.

Daniel was asked if there was anything else he could think of that would assist in the investigation. He stated that she was in contact with one of her friends about legal representation.

Daniel was asked if there was any mention of recent maintenance to the airplane. He responded that there was no recent maintenance and that everything was great and that they fueled the airplane before flying. He was asked how much fuel was added and he replied, "5 gallons from a can". Daniel stated there is only one tank and that it was at the top. He further stated that the fuel can was already in the hangar and the entire can was emptied into the airplane.

Daniel was asked if they did a preflight of the airplane. He responded "yes" and that all three of them did a walk around. He stated that the airplane had oil and believe it was three gallons, because it was an old airplane. Daniel was asked if it was hard to start the airplane. He responded that they had to "cycle it a few times" and prime it because it had been a while since it had flown. They did not have any problems once the engine started.

The investigative process was described to Daniel and that Elizabeth would also be interviewed, even if she did not remember much.

-End of conversation

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Date: July 29, 2024

Subject: ERA24LA229 First Passenger Interview (follow-up)

Contact: Daniel Voelker

Daniel was contacted via telephone to discuss his flight with the accident pilot. The following is a summary of the conversation:

Daniel was asked if he got to fly the airplane on the flight prior to the accident. He responded "yes". He was asked how long he flew, and he stated that he flew the airplane for about 15 minutes. He took control of the airplane once they leveled out of the climb and he gave the controls back to the pilot when they entered the 45, downwind of the runway. The pilot took back the controls and landed the airplane.

Daniel was asked if the airplane hit a runway marker when they landed. He responded that they did hit one of the runway side lights. He further stated that Mark checked out the airplane before the next flight and that no damage was found.

Daniel was asked if there was any discussion between Mark and Elizabeth about her flying the airplane once they went back up. He replied that there was discussion about her flying when they went up and that it would be a similar plan to how he got to fly the airplane.

Daniel was asked when fueling of the airplane occurred. He replied that the pilot fueled the airplane before his flight and did not add more fuel between his flight and the accident flight. He was asked what kind of fuel was added and he stated that he believes it was 100LL and that he had similar looking cans in the hangar. He stated that the pilot added a gallon canister of fuel. He may have added more but he was unsure.

Daniel was asked that when he was flying the airplane if the instrumentation in front of him worked. He replied, yes, to his knowledge. Daniel was asked how fast the airplane cruised when he was flying. He replied that he didn't really remember but that it was probably 60-70 knots and a lot slower than the Cessna he is use to.

Daniel was asked if he had any questions about the investigation. He asked how long the report would take. It was explained that the report would be written shortly and that it would be released likely in a couple of more months.

-End of Conversation