



# NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Lynn Spencer**  
**Aviation Investigator**  
**Eastern Region, Office of Aviation Safety (ERA)**  
**National Transportation Safety Board**

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**Date: 11/5/2019**

**Person Interviewed: Mr. Chris Cunningham, General Manager, Colonial Air**  
**NTSB Accident Number: ERA20FA031**

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The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the above-named individual:

- Mr. Cunningham is the General Manager and the Director of Maintenance at the full-service fixed base operation (FBO) Colonial Air at the New Bedford Regional Airport, New Bedford, MA.
- He stated that he sold Mr. Vidal the airplane back in the 1990s and has maintained the airplane since before Mr. Vidal purchased the airplane.
- He stated that the videos he has seen from the accident “are not him. He was a cautious and conservative pilot.”
- He saw Mr. Vidal about a week before the accident and he seemed his normal self and that he was aware of no medical or other issues.
- He stated that they were not personal friends so that Mr. Vidal would not have confided.
- He stated that Mr. Vidal had a child in California and had considered flying out there for a visit and had tried to convince him to take off two weeks to join him for the flight.
- He said that the Mr. Vidal “is the pilot who flies 2 hours and then refuels because he needs to have 1.5 hours of fuel on board,” and that he “would not fly in overcast days like today (1100 OVC).”
- He stated that Mr. Vidal had a Foreflight subscription and an iPad that he used when flying, and that he assisted in the set-up of the iPad and that it made Mr. Vidal feel more comfortable that he could see the airplanes around him.
- He added, “Something was not right. He was pleasant, conservative and not a dare-devil. He did a thorough pre-flight every time.”



# NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Lynn Spencer**  
**Aviation Investigator**  
**Eastern Region, Office of Aviation Safety (ERA)**  
**National Transportation Safety Board**

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**Date: 11/7/2019, 1010 EST**

**Person Interviewed: Mr. Chris Cunningham, General Manager, Colonial Air**

**NTSB Accident Number: ERA20FA031**

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The following is a summary of a conversation that occurred with the above-named individual:

- Mr. Cunningham is the General Manager and the Director of Maintenance at the full-service fixed base operation (FBO) Colonial Air at the New Bedford Regional Airport, New Bedford, MA.
- I asked Mr. Cunningham to walk me through the process he used when conducting an annual inspection. He stated that he completes the entire inspection first and then performs any necessary repairs.
- He outlined his general inspection process:
  - He stated that he pre-runs the airplane then does a pre-inspection including checks of the magnetos, oil pressure, oil temperature, then completes a compression test. He then drains the oil and changed the oil filter (in the case of the accident airplane, he changed the spin-on filter). The following day he examines the oil filter for foreign debris. He cleans and gaps the spark plugs, checks the magneto timing, inspects the propeller and baffling (looking for oil leaks), examines the fuel strainer, checks the battery, and then checks all airplane lights. He opens all inspection panels, lubricates everything, adds oil, and while the spinner is removed, paints the propeller so as not to get paint on the spinner. The airplane is jacked up and he then inspects the wheels, brakes and bearings, then performs a post-inspection engine run-up. He would also check online for any Airworthiness Directives (AD) to ensure compliance.
- He uses a checklist for the inspection and keeps a discrepancy log sheet during the inspection. At the completion of the inspection, he discards the checklist and uses the discrepancy sheet to create the invoice and attaches it to the invoice to keep with the airplane's maintenance records.



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

- He reported that he uses the Cessna checklist and maintenance manuals to perform the inspection. When inspecting the Cessna 150, he would keep the paper manuals in front of him to refer to.
- He uses both paper and digital data (ATP and TCM) for his inspections.
- He reported that the most recent annual inspection performed on N714LK occurred June 7, 2019 and provided those records.
- He stated that there is a nut plate AD for the Cessna 150 but that this AD was not applicable to N714LK because terminating action was previously taken, and the nut plates had been replaced with hex nuts. During the annual inspection, he used a mirror to inspect those.
- There is also an ignition switch AD on this airplane.
- I inquired about the existence of an AD for the airplane heat, and he reported that there is none for the Cessna 150.
- He stated that the O-200 engine is a little more susceptible to carburetor icing, and that some of his customers with this engine have installed carburetor ice detectors in their airplanes, but others have experienced no issues.
- I inquired how the mufflers were inspected and he reported that he would remove the 6 screws on the top of the muffler shrouds, and open each “like a taco” to inspect the muffler, looking for stains, soot or cracks which would indicate that he needed to change the muffler. He stated that there were two mufflers on the Cessna 150, both with shrouds around them in which air was warmed for the cabin heat (one muffler) and for the carburetor heat (second muffler). He stated that this was also a part of the annual inspection.
- I called Mr. Cunningham back at 1224 EST to ask about the appearance of the mufflers on N714LK during the inspection and he stated that they looked normal: they were both darker or blackish and any soot would be light grey, and he did not see any soot or other anomalies.

**From:** [COLONIAL AIR CO](#)  
**To:** [Spencer Lynn](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Update Record of Conversation for your review.  
**Date:** Friday, November 8, 2019 11:55:23 AM

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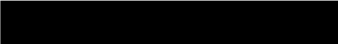
[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Lynn,  
No pressure testing is done. Just a visual inspection.

Chris

Chris Cunningham  
Colonial Air, Inc.



On November 8, 2019 at 11:41 AM Spencer Lynn  wrote:

Thank you, Chris,

I appreciate that additional information. Other than visual inspection, do you typically do any pressure checking to check for leaks?

I am going to be heading home shortly, but reach out if you have any more information that might be helpful, and thank you again for your time.

Regards,

Lynn Spencer

Air Safety Investigator

National Transportation Safety Board

45065 Bles Park Drive

Ashburn, VA 20147

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** COLONIAL AIR CO [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 8, 2019 11:32 AM  
**To:** Spencer Lynn [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Update Record of Conversation for your review.

[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Lynn,

The mufflers are made of stainless steel and new are a grey-ish color. As they age from heat etc. they turn the darker grey color.

Being made of stainless steel they don't "rust and corrode" like an automotive exhaust system does. That being said the lead in 100LL becomes lead oxide when it burns and that is corrosive. Corroding the exhaust system from the inside out over time. They are inspected like we discussed earlier every year for cracks and other defects( dents, bungling or blisters, corrosion, leaks etc).

Kind of long winded answer but hope it helps

Anything else please let me know.

Chris

Chris Cunningham  
Colonial Air, Inc.



On November 8, 2019 at 10:53 AM Spencer Lynn  
<[redacted]> wrote:

Chris,

And I do believe even those details you provided are important.

Question about the blackish/brownish muffler: What does that represent? Do you inspect for corrosion?

Thank you and enjoy your weekend!

Lynn Spencer

Air Safety Investigator

National Transportation Safety Board

45065 Bles Park Drive

Ashburn, VA 20147

