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St. Croix EMT on American Airlines Flight Saves the Day After Providing Emergency Care to Two Passengers Who Fell Ill

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Natasha Ramon, a Virgin Islander from St. Croix and nationally registered EMT leaped into action to help two passengers who needed emergency care on a Jan. 10, 2022 AA flight to Trinidad. By. FILE PHOTO

Natasha Ramon, a highly trained nationally registered EMT from St. Croix was on her way to Trinidad on January 10, minding her business and giving no thought to the prospects that she would wind up being the key person on American Airlines flight 2703.

However, when it was all over, Ms. Ramon did not only assist one, but two individuals with serious medical emergencies, and her recommendations for course of action for the patients while

she stabilized them were adopted. She was also praised via the plane's intercom for her heroic actions, and was received with loud rounds of applause from flight passengers. [Here's](#) a clip of the moment, sent to Ms. Ramon.

During an interview with the Consortium Wednesday, Ms. Ramon, who was trying to avoid recognition for the Good Samaritan act, explained how it all happened.

"We boarded the flight and already on the runway, when a passenger became unresponsive. A Flight attendant asked if anyone is medically trained. No one answered so I just made up my mind to raise my hand and assist," she said.

"A flight attendant handed over the entire medical bag. After assessing the patient it was determined that the plane had to turn around. I turned the patient over to a paramedic who determined the same. A stretcher was brought onboard and the patient was transported to a hospital."

By then, Ms. Ramon thought her EMT skills had been set aside for the day and the remainder of her trip to Trinidad from Miami would be mundane. She was mistaken.

"While in the air, the flight attendant came to me with another medical emergency. I honestly thought she was joking until I heard screaming in the back," Ms. Ramon said. With alacrity, she activated her EMT skills yet again and assisted the passenger for the remainder of the flight.

"I'm just the vessel, so after filling out the medical reports and relaying info, patient's vitals and current condition to the captain, I told the flight attendant I didn't want any recognition," she told the Consortium. That outcome, however, would not materialize, as passengers on the flight determined that what happened on Jan. 10 should not be kept secret.

A mother of one daughter, Ms. Ramon graduated in the EMT class of 2018 on St. Croix, and was trained by instructor Jaqueline Greenidge Payne, a paramedic. Thereafter, she continued her upward mobility when she graduated AEMT, or Advanced Emergency Medical Technician class of 2021 at the Georgia Institute of EMS, and trained by instructor Dawn Bartow, also a paramedic.

"I am currently a Nationally Registered Emergency Medical Technician employed by Dept of Health EMS," Ms. Ramon told the Consortium. Prior to her employment at D.O.H., she gained experience at the Juan F. Luis Hospital ER as a Certified Medical Assistance. Overall, Ms. Ramon has roughly twelve years in the medical field.

The Consortium sought to learn what it was like in that moment for Ms. Ramon. "In the moment I wasn't nervous at all," she said, though she was concerned about working with limited resources and medical equipment provided by the AA Flight attendants. "We receive continuous training year-round that entails active mock scenarios. We debrief after challenging emergencies. During training, my instructor, Mrs. Greenidge, constantly reminds us that "time is brain cell, time is a life that we may only get one chance to get it right." Therefore, almost all our mistakes are made in the classroom. Thankfully, the medical emergencies did not occur simultaneously, but even if they did I am trained to triage and assist."

When asked whether the frantic nature of the incident unsettled her, Ms. Ramon said crowd control is also part of EMS training. "I instructed everyone to give me space to allow me to work," she said. "As soon as I felt safe, I did what I enjoy doing most."

Asked how does it feel being under the spotlight for potentially saving the lives of two individuals in one day, Ms. Ramon said, "EMTs, first responders and healthcare workers often go unnoticed. Our reward truly comes from the patient, family members and even bystanders like Mr. Faller saying thank you for your service. Being that so many passengers including the captain asked where I was from, how did I do what I did so flawlessly, I felt blessed, highly favored and very proud to say I am a Virgin Islander from St. Croix." Alfred Faller is a St. Thomas resident who was a passenger on the American Airlines flight to Trinidad.

Ms. Ramon also encouraged everyone of age to learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR. "Even if you are not in the medical field, it is important to obtain CPR training," she said. "CPR training should be implemented in our school curriculum. We often take situations for granted until it happens right in front us or when it hits home. Time wasted to provide care is a life that could be saved. Let's not wait for that to happen."

Ms. Ramon did not provide details on the medical condition of the passengers that triggered the emergency response, citing HIPAA laws, though a medical report was written and turned over to American Airlines' medical personnel.

In regards to the patients, she said, "As of date both passengers are doing well."