



MEMORANDUM for RECORD

Ralph E. Hicks
Senior Air Safety Investigator, IIC
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: May 4, 2022

Witness Statement: Dan Phillips

NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA218 – Altha, Florida

The following witness statement was provided by Mr. Phillips via personal interview at Calhoun County Airport (F95).

- He was outside at the FBO parking lot at the time, in his truck, windows down, closest spot to the ramp. His truck was pointing south.
- He could hear N6413B taking off, initially he could not see the airplane.
- He saw the airplane break ground and lift off. It entered a high angle of attack with the tail low. The nose was to the left and the tail was to the right, as if it were in a “slip.” As it passed the departure end of runway 36, it veered off to the left.
- The pitch attitude stayed the same throughout the flight with the high angle of attack and tail low. He then began an “aggressive” turn to the east. He thought to himself, “the aircraft is going to crash.”
- He lost sight of the airplane behind the hangar just north of the FBO and heard the impact; it made a loud “boom.”
- He immediately responded to the crash site. One of the passengers was standing up and the wreckage was “blazing.” He assisted in pulling Steve out of the airplane.
- The engine sounded “just fine” throughout the takeoff, flight, and up to the impact.



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Date: August 18, 2022
Witness Statement: Devin Ferrell ([REDACTED])
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA218 – Altha, Florida

The following witness/passenger statement was provided by Mr. Ferrell via telephone interview.

- Mr. Ferrell reported that he was still recovering from the accident. He had shoulder replacement surgery. Major injuries included his left shoulder, then an infection in the shoulder while recovering. Neck fracture and broken ribs.
- He did not recall if he fastened his seat belt before the flight. He was seated in the right, rear passenger seat, next to Grayson McCroan.
- He could not talk through his headset, so he took it off prior to the flight and could not hear the conversations of the others in the airplane.
- He did not recall the accident sequence. He recalls at one point being over pine trees, then he woke up three days later in the hospital. He did not recall any conversations or aural warnings during the flight.
- Mr. Ferrell stated that he weighed 170 pounds at the time of the accident.
- Mr. Ferrell stated that he had never flown in N6413B; in fact, this was his first ever flight in a small airplane.
- Prior to the flight, the pilot, Randy McCroan, did not ask him for his weight and he did not observe him calculating weight and balance.



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Date: May 4, 2022

Witness Statement: Robert "Doc" Phillips [REDACTED]

NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA218 – Altha, Florida

The following witness statement was provided by Mr. Phillips via personal interview at Calhoun County Airport (F95).

- He was outside the FBO at the time, and Steve, the owner of N6413B drove by and told him that he could fly his airplane anytime. Steve was on his way to the airplane.
- He observed the takeoff. The airplane "...pitched way up for an old 172."
- He said to himself, "Push the nose over!" The pilot never got the nose over; it was on the edge of a stall the entire time it was airborne. He observed the wings rocking back and forth. How he kept it in the air, he did not know.
- He stated that the pilot just needed to "put it down....controlled crash it."
- The airplane disappeared behind the hangar just north of the FBO and crashed. He got a fire bottle and drove over to the fence to assist. The wreckage lit off in a few seconds.
- The engine was running "full bore" until the airplane hit the ground.



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Date: May 7, 2022
Text Correspondence from Anna Williams, FAA Coordinator
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA218 – Altha, Florida

The following witness statement was provided by Anna Williams via text from her iPhone:

Good morning Sir,

I hope your drive went well and was able to get a little R&R.

I just spoke with Martin McConnell [REDACTED] -different number that was called yesterday]. He stated "the aircraft was sold on 18 February 2022 to Steve Mears and his friend Randy was with him. They flew up to Wilmington NC, where he picked them up and drove them to the aircraft. They paid cash, took both copies of the bill of sale as too register it. They flew home and received an email the next day—informing him it was uneventful and good flight.

I hope the information helps.

Very Respectfully,
Anna Sent from my iPhone



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Date: May 4, 2022
Witness Statement: Steve Mays [REDACTED]
NTSB Accident Number: ERA22FA218 – Altha, Florida

The following witness statement was provided by Mr. Mays via personal interview at Calhoun County Airport (F95).

- Mr. Mays was not sure of the exact time of the event; he was sitting in the FBO pilot lounge at the time.
- He could see the windsock, the wind was out of the west about 10-15 knots.
- He saw the airplane rotate, it quickly went up into a high angle of attack. Doc was standing there and said, "Put the nose down!"
- He did not see the airplane in flight as it proceeded north but knew it was going to crash. Everyone got in their trucks and drove to the fence to help.
- There was a lot of postcrash fire....it was very hot. He gave Devin (one of the passengers) first aid. Dan (Phillips) came over to help as well.