

Investigator Name: Leah D. Read
Title: Sr. ASI
Division: ERA

Date: October 11, 2022

Subject: ERA23FA008

Contact: Ashton Burton, pilot rated passenger

Mr. Burton was interviewed via telephone. He was still in the hospital being treated for the serious injuries he sustained in the accident. Mr. Burton said he was a student at Hampton University and was enrolled in the aviation program. He had a private pilot license and was working on his instrument rating at Rick Aviation. Mr. Burton knew the student pilot from school. He said the student pilot asked him to go on the flight because the student pilot was nervous about it being his first training flight. Mr. Burton said he could tell the student pilot was nervous during the preflight inspection because when the instructor would have him perform a task, he would either do it too little or too much. Mr. Burton said the student pilot did not normally act like that, and felt it was just nerves in regard to the flight. Mr. Burton said the instructor appeared "normal" and he did not notice anything unusual about her behavior.

For the flight, Mr. Burton was seated behind the student pilot (who was in the front left seat) and used the available 3-point seatbelt/shoulder harness. In preparation for the takeoff, Mr. Burton said the instructor (front right seat) had the student pilot place his hands on the control wheel. The instructor told the student pilot that she would tell him when to start pulling back on the control wheel during the takeoff roll. Mr. Burton said the instructor had "most of the controls" during the takeoff except for pulling back on the control wheel. Mr. Burton said the takeoff roll was normal, and when the airplane reached rotation speed, the instructor advised the student pilot to start pulling back on the control wheel. The student pilot pulled back on

the control wheel and the airplane lifted off the runway. Everything was normal "at first" and the airplane began to climb. But the student pilot kept pulling back on the control wheel and the airplane pitched up, the stall horn came on, and the airplane began to stall before it "nose-dived" to the ground. The stall horn stayed on until impact. Mr. Burton did not recall the flight instructor saying anything to the student pilot as this was occurring, but she was trying hard to get control of the airplane before it hit the ground. He thought she may have pushed the nose over at one point, but by the time she could get control, "it was too late." Mr. Burton said after the impact, the flight instructor was unresponsive, and the student pilot was moving and trying to talk. Mr.

Burton called 911 and stayed on the phone until rescue personnel arrived. Mr. Burton said the engine was operating "fine" the entire flight. When asked if he thought the student pilot's seat slipped back on the takeoff climb, Mr. Burton said that he "couldn't tell."

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