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Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

Date: April 23, 2025

Subject: ERA25LA183, Record of Conversation/Interview

Contact: Kimberly Hefner

Ms. Kimberly Hefner was contacted by phone on April 22, 2025, at 1302 EDT. She was called at [REDACTED] She provided an e-mail address of [REDACTED]

At the beginning of the interview she was advised that the NTSB is a federal agency mandated by Congress to investigate aircraft accidents, and NTSB has no authority to take any action against any individual. She was also informed that the purpose of an NTSB investigation is for safety only, and any person NTSB talks with has the right to representation; she agreed to the interview without representation.

She was advised by e-mail when sending this document for review that it will not be released to the public until the investigation is finished and when published, any personal identifiable information (PII) such as cell phone number, e-mail address, address, pilot certificate number, etc., will be redacted and not viewable in the released document.

She was contacted to clarify details about her witnessing the accident involving N497AR, that occurred on April 18, 2025, in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

She indicated that she is not a pilot or mechanic and is not mechanically inclined. Her nephew was on-board the airplane.

She was asked the following questions:

What was the purpose of the flight?

The flight was coming in to land then after landing they intended to eat at the nearby restaurant.

Where did the flight depart from?

Lenoir, North Carolina.

NTSB Questions Continued –

Has the pilot flown into that location before?

I think so, yes.

Do you know the pilot?

I did not know him personally.

How is the passenger, your nephew doing?

He sustained a broken nose, and broke the cap off of the bone of one of his thumbs.

What is her nephew's name and age?

Colt Hefner, 13 years old.

What injury did the pilot sustain?

Fractured collarbone and coccyx, and stitches in his fingers.

Please describe what you saw and heard?

The flight was coming in to land, while she and her brother-in-law and husband were talking how it was windy. The airplane was wobbling left to right, and side to side. The wind was pushing the airplane and the pilot tried to pull up. When he did, a "huge wind gust" occurred and the airplane nose dived to the ground.

How did the engine sound?

It sounded good. It didn't sound to her like there was anything wrong with the engine.

Was the engine sound steady the whole time?

Yes.

When the "pull up" occurred did you hear the engine sound increase?

Yes, yes.

Did the engine sound steady when it increased during the "pull up"?

Yes, yes.

Did you perceive any engine issue during the approach and pull up?

No, no.

Who were you with?

Her brother-in-law and her husband (Caleb).

Were either of them filming?

Matthew Hefner was filming. His video stopped at the same time hers did.

NTSB Questions Continued –

What is Matthew's contact?

Cell [REDACTED]

The call ended at 1315 EDT.

The digest was e-mailed to her for review on May 12, 2025. She replied on May 12, 2025 at 1228 EDT with no comments.