



## MEMORANDUM for RECORD

Millicent Hill  
Air Safety Investigator  
Eastern Region Aviation

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Date: September 16, 2020  
Person Contacted: Frederick Cahn- FAA Inspector

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This investigator interviewed Mr. Cahn by telephone and email, he responded to the accident scene and provided the following statement:

Prior to the flight, Airman SCHILLER stated to Ethan Smyth, a Stowe Aviation employee at the fixed base operation (FBO), that she was: "doing some instruction" and that she was "waiting for my student to arrive." SCHILLER has a private pilot license but does not have an instructor license (CFI).

A male passenger arrived shortly thereafter and went out to the aircraft. Smyth noted that the male passenger appeared to be conducting some sort of preflight inspection with SCHILLER. The male passenger has a current FAA 3rd class medical certificate but has no student pilot license nor any other FAA certificate.

Smyth was one of the first to arrive at the scene of the accident. Smyth reported that the male passenger was seated in the left seat, normally the seat for the pilot, and SCHILLER was seated in the right seat. SCHILLER confirmed in an email to this inspector that she was in the right seat,

The fact that the "passenger" was in the left seat, may indicate SCHILLER was conducting flight instruction.

During a post-accident inspection of the aircraft by inspector Cartier of this office the rudders appeared to be locked and unmovable. There was a major deformation of the structure around the rudder pedals and severe damage to the floor area where the rudder cables pass through.

Post-accident inspection revealed a quantity of tall grass jammed in the gap between the right elevator horn and the right horizontal stabilizer. Additionally, a small amount of long grass was attached to the tailwheel. The grass in the accident area was mowed short and the grass attached to the aircraft did not originate there. It is unknown when the long grass became attached to the aircraft.

Post-accident manipulation of the flight controls by inspector Cartier indicated control continuity and confirmed that the grass did not materially affect the operation of the elevator.

In an email dated 09/15/2020 SCHILLER stated that she was in the right seat, had no difficulties with flight controls, and did not know what caused the plane to veer left.

Summary of the video file:

- 11:21:07 N170JS is seen entering the frame in a steep banking left-hand turn
- 11:21:09 N170JS's left wing impacts the ground while in a steep left-hand turn of approximately 110°
- 11:21:10 N170JS impacts the ground with damage occurring to the cowl, main gear, and cabin section
- 11:21:12 N170JS's right wing impacts the ground with accompanying fuel burst from left tank rupture
- 11:21:14 N170JS tail comes down on tailwheel on the east side of runway. Empennage does not touch the earth except for tailwheel.