

Tuesday accident shouldn't have happened, sergeant says

Written by Lauren Ohnesorge
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More details are emerging in the accident that claimed 14-year-old Christina Renee Royal Tuesday morning.

The Chevy Trail Blazer was traveling on U.S. 321 almost 10 miles northwest of Boone at the time of the accident. The victim was sitting on the lap of 16-year-old Robbie Campbell. Other passengers were 14-year-old John Railing and 16-year-old William Hugh Frye.

Eighteen-year-old driver Tiffany Absher lost control of the vehicle, which rolled over, ran off the road to the left, and hit a tree according to police. Highway Patrol Sergeant Derek Dawson said, "During the rollover Mrs. Absher, the driver, and Ms. Royal, who was seated on the front right seat in the passengers lap, were both ejected from the vehicle. Dawson said, "The vehicle rolled over Ms. Royal and killed her."

Neither Absher nor Royal wearing their seatbelts. It is unknown whether the other occupants had seatbelts. All persons in the vehicle, save Campbell, were treated on scene by Watauga EMS and transported to Watauga Medical Center.

Campbell fled the accident scene, but is in police custody today for violating probation. Highway Patrol suspects he fled because the accident occurred out of his probation area.

Sergeant Dawson believes this accident never should have happened.

"There is no reason that the group of people that were in the vehicle should have been out at that 2:36am; even if school's out." Dawson added, "The other issue is the manner in which the vehicle was being operated... you've got several young people who were not wearing their seatbelts...they were not seated where they should have been."

Sergeant Dawson called the behavior irresponsible. He reminded everyone that

it only takes a split second for a minor error to lead to severe consequences.

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