



MEMORANDUM

Arnold W, Scott
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Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspectors Larry McKillop and Richard D. Anderson interviewed the pilot's son, who told them that he and his father had researched available airplanes to own together. They located this particular airplane in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. While he was out of town, his father drove to North Carolina, purchased the plane, and trucked it home. This was the first airplane that he had owned. The son reassembled the airplane for his father. On the day of the accident, the father took the airplane without telling the family and went flying. He indicated that there may have been as many as two or three previous flights. His father was told by local pilots to seek training before attempting to fly.

There is no indication that the father or son knew this was an airplane. They thought they were buying an ultralight, not a certificated airplane. The son did not seem knowledgeable of any airworthiness requirements. The aircraft has remained registered to the previous owner. There is no evidence of registration transfer. No registration or airworthiness certificates were found in the airplane.

The inspectors interviewed the pilot's estranged wife. She stated that the pilot and his son had been researching ultralights as far back as 2012. In his desire to become a pilot, her husband acquired radio-controlled vehicles, including airplanes and helicopters, and purchased flight simulator software and attached it to his television. He attended classroom education on piloting on two or three occasions, and she thought he may have taken some flight instruction. He had friends who owned airplanes and he had flown with them on numerous occasions. He kept the purchase of the airplane a secret from his wife for some time. She thought this was a newly manufactured product, and that this was probably his first flight in the airplane.

The FAA inspectors were told by the Gross Ile Police Department that witnesses reported hearing the engine "sputtering" with a "revving" sound just prior to impact. The police also said a witness saw the right wing strike a tree in a neighbor's yard. The impact swung the fuselage into a tree. No written statements were received from the police department.