

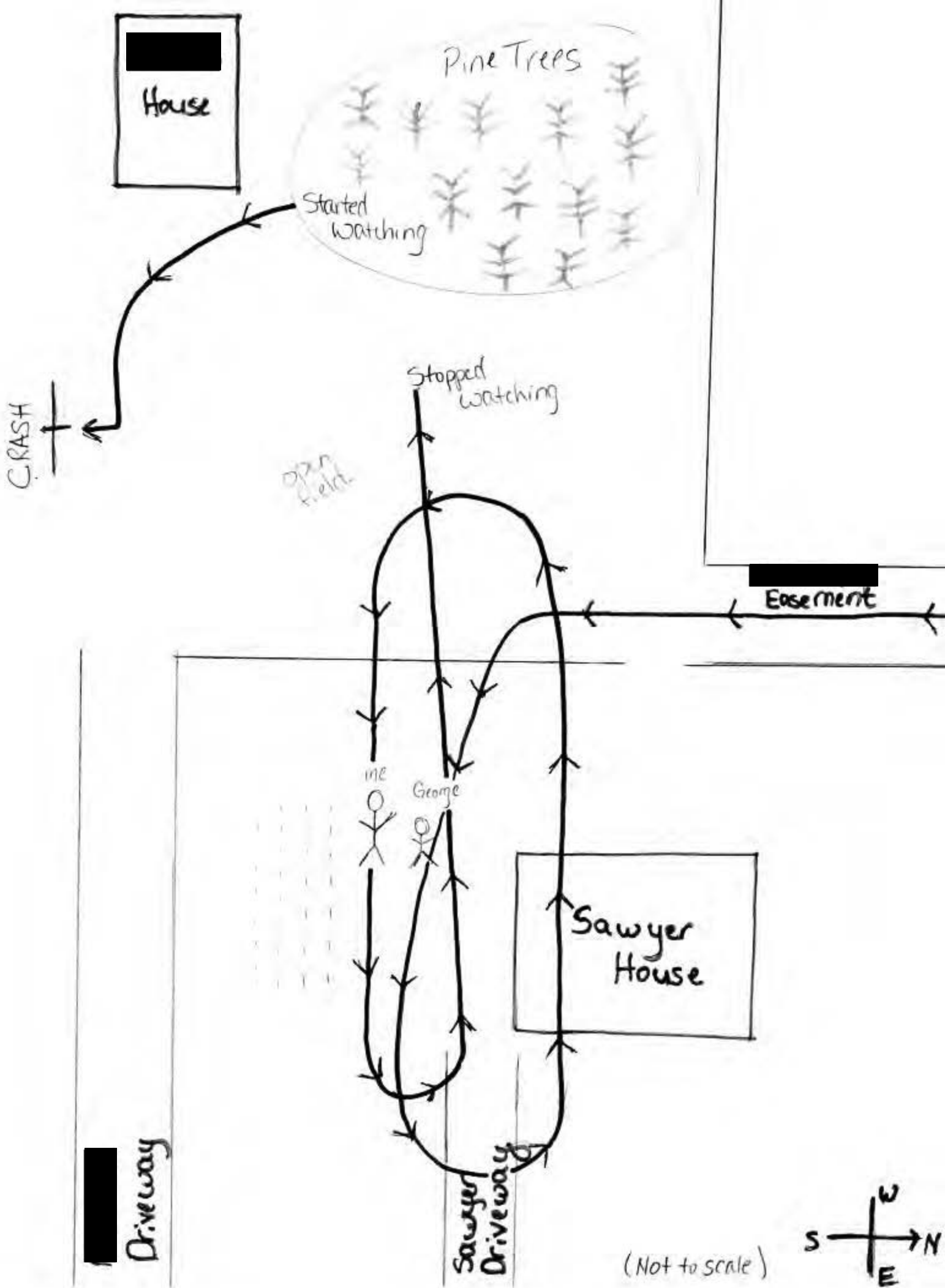
To: Michael Pupek, Aviation Safety Inspector
ATL AVS
PO Box 20636
Atlanta, Ga 30320

This is Sara Lynne Sawyer's account of the events immediately preceding the crash of Wayne Ray Morrell's plane on March 15, 2015. The accident occurred at [REDACTED] Reynolds, GA around 1815 on the property of [REDACTED].

Shortly after 6:00pm, I went out to my garden on the southwest corner of our property. I saw Wayne Morrell flying his plane from the north headed south toward my house. He made a turn over the open field behind me and headed east toward the road flying directly over where I was standing. Before reaching the road, he turned left, 180 degrees, and headed west back toward me but crossed over my house. He was flying low at that time, coming very close to the top of my 2-story house. He made another 180-degree turn headed east back toward the road. Again, before reaching the road, he looped back around and headed west (over me again) to the back of my property. I waved at him. He continued flying west over the [REDACTED]' property coming very close to their pine trees. (Note: I could see him in the plane when he headed west over me and expected him to wave, but he did not. That was highly uncharacteristic of him. However, he looked alert at that time and focused on his gauges.) I did not watch him fly over the [REDACTED] house. When I looked up again, he was headed east again directly in line with the [REDACTED] driveway that leads to [REDACTED] Road. The plane was much lower, maybe 150-200 feet off the ground (roughly as high as the pine trees). It appeared as if he lining up to attempt a landing in that driveway. Without warning, the plane took a sharp pitch forward and turned right at the same time. Before I could blink, it crashed into the ground, nose first, making a loud "crunch". The engine was running both times the plane crossed over me and was also running when it pitched forward. (I remember hearing the plane make a sound like "dive-bomber" planes make in the movies as they nose dive. It sounded like he "goosed" the engine.) I am almost certain the engine stopped just before impact, but I know it was not running at the time I reached the middle of the field, approximately 20-30 seconds later. I do not remember hearing his engine stall, stop, or sputter at any other time, but I know very little about engines. I did not see any smoke, oil, or anything else coming from the plane at any time.

My unofficial opinion:

Based on what I do know from talking with the other witness and his flight buddy, I believe that he realized his engine was not performing correctly before he reached us. He knew the property well, and he came here to attempt a landing in the [REDACTED] driveway. Though I did not specifically hear it, I also think the engine stalled and the "goose" sound I heard was his final attempt to restart/jump the engine. With all the oil, a blown head gasket seems to be what everyone believes caused the accident. The engine stalls at 38 mph and he was flying low and slow. There was not enough weight to the plane for it to glide at all, so it "fell out of the sky" once the speed reached 38 mph. The plane weighed 282 lbs without a pilot, but the indentation in the ground was at least 12 inches deep. There was a tremendous amount of force behind that plane when it made contact with the ground.



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This is Matt Sawyer's account of the events immediately preceding the crash of Wayne Ray Morrell's plane on March 15, 2015. The accident occurred at [REDACTED] Reynolds, GA around 1815 on the property of [REDACTED].

I was inside my home at [REDACTED] Rd on the northern end of the house. I heard a plane flying low over the house twice, then what sounded like an engine being revved up followed by a loud bang. My son, [REDACTED], ran in the house crying and said "call 911! Nanny's plane crashed." (Nanny is the nickname Wayne's family called him). I called 911 as I ran to the field. I handed the phone to my wife and ran to the plane. When I got there, the engine was not running and fuel was leaking as I was attempting to get him out of the plane. I saw a lot of oil coming out of the engine. (Note: From the time 911 was called to the time I got to the plane was less than 45 seconds).