

David A. Seace



Subject : Affidavit on notes of interaction with Dr. Mauro Carlo Dal Canto

I visited Dr. Mauro in Utah the week before his unfortunate fatal accident to help him setup the AR-1 gyroplane N261MD and also help him familiarize with its systems.

I was there for two full days and was unable to get him to pick me up and spend adequate time with me. He had some downhill ski competition engagements that took both his mornings away and he could not come and pick me up to spend time flying or understanding the machine till around lunch time.

The first day was spent and wasted learning to pre-rotate and making slight changes to the brake handle on left hand because Dr. Mauro had a previous ski injury which had mutilated one of his left hand fingers and knuckles and was not able to hold the brake enough to do a safe pre-rotation. This required making changes in the field to the aircraft to accommodate this handicap. More importantly, this took away precious time that should have been spent flying and learning the aircraft flight characteristics.

The second day we were able to go flying but again the day started around lunch time. On his first attempt of taking off, he seemed very abrupt on power application and was over-controlling the aircraft aggressively that taking it into PIOs. After going around the pattern with over-controlling it on both takeoff and landing, we pulled the aircraft into the hanger and I had a talk with him to slow down and reduce all control inputs and use throttle gently and smoothly. Upon taking my instructions he started to fly the aircraft with more control but any input he did induce seemed still abrupt and aggressive. We landed the second time and we had lunch with his wife and I explained t her the current situation.

Upon going out the next time, she monitored Dr. Mauro's flights with me in the aircraft from a chair outside their hanger. This time control inputs were smoother but power input was still a bit abrupt and aggressive. After five to six touch n go's, he was gradually becoming better with my instructions from the back seat.

We also called my employer about a radio issue but I also took the opportunity to ask if I needed to stay longer would that be ok which my employer had no problem with. Dr. Mauro was already a rated gyroplane pilot but I felt that he needed more instruction and transition time into this aircraft. His experience had been only in side by side gyroplanes and this model was a tandem seater with a different sight picture. Dr. Mauro had a habit of dropping his control stick to the right that I believe came from flying the side by side gyroplane. Tandem gyroplanes do not need any roll input while flying level.

At the end of the second day, Dr. Mauro's son Rick was going to show up who is also a gyroplane rated pilot. Upon hearing that I suggested that it may be a good idea for me to fly Rick in this gyroplane so he could possibly assist his father as a safety pilot. Dr. Mauro became a little upset upon hearing this suggestion. I also mentioned that I could possibly stay over longer to help him familiarize more with the machine. Dr. Mauro's comment back was that "I got it".

When Rick came to the hanger and I mentioned my idea again about taking him up to make him familiar with the machine so he could fly with his father, Dr. Mauro became visibly upset this time and firmly insisted that the front seat of that gyroplane belongs only to him.

They went to the other side of the hanger and had some kind of an argument. It was clear that I stepped into something I should not have and was not aware of whatever friction there was between father and son. My gracious host sort of abandoned me and I had to walk to the hotel from the hanger as sun was setting. Next morning, I had to arrange my own Uber to get to the airport for flight back to Florida. I had no contact since that evening with Dr. Mauro.

I do not believe that Dr. Mauro had enough transition training in this new machine and was heavy handed on controls. He was over confident in his abilities in this case.

Signed: 

Dated: 08/12/2021