

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FATAL GYROCOPTER CRASH AT
CAPE GIRARDEAU REGIONAL
AIRPORT IN SCOTT COUNTY,
MISSOURI ON MAY 22, 2022

Accident No.: WPR22FA184

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Interview of: MARK SPRIGG

Tuesday,
May 24, 2022

APPEARANCES:

STEPHEN STEIN, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N T E R V I E W

(5:39 p.m. CDT)

MR. STEIN: All right. Stephen Stein with the NTSB. It's May 24, 2022. It is 1739 Central Daylight Time. I'm here with Mark Sprigg.

Mark, could you state your name and spell it out?

MR. SPRIGG: Yeah. Mark Sprigg, M-A-R-K, S-P-R-I-G-G.

MR. STEIN: G-G. Okay, great. And then, Mark, are you okay if we record you?

MR. SPRIGG: Yes.

MR. STEIN: Thank you very much. And then, just to let you know that this recording is going to be transcribed; and then, at the end of the investigation, will be made available in our public docket. Are you okay with that?

MR. SPRIGG: I am okay with that, yes. I would -- it would be nice to review the, the transcript before, just so that -- I don't know. Sometimes, I think, when it's transcribed, there's some maybe misunderstanding of what I said, so I just, I wondered if there would be a chance to review that before it --

MR. STEIN: Absolutely.

MR. SPRIGG: -- becomes permanent record, yeah.

MR. STEIN: Yeah. Absolutely. We'll make sure we --

MR. SPRIGG: Okay.

MR. STEIN: -- get you one. And in fact, can I get your email address?

1 MR. SPRIGG: Yeah. Email address is mksprigg, S-P-R-I-G-G,
2 mksprigg, @hotmail.com.

3 MR. STEIN: Great. Okay. That's great.

4 INTERVIEW OF MARK SPRIGG

5 BY MR. STEIN:

6 Q. All right. Mark, could you -- let's start from the
7 beginning. So -- and I don't know how far back we can take this
8 and how far back your conversations with the pilot went, but let's
9 -- I guess we should probably start with the day of the
10 accident --

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. -- and sort of what -- or, actually, maybe even start before
13 that. Let's start with -- because I understand he came down to
14 see you to purchase the aircraft, right? Were you the --

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Okay. So, could you go ahead and just tell me about that?
17 Tell me about the origin of this, how that relationship sort of
18 became to be, and then what the plan was.

19 A. Yes. Bruce was a friend of Dan Todd's (ph.) in South Dakota,
20 and they discovered the gyroplane. They went to Paul Salmon,
21 Greg Gremminger, the people in Missouri, and got training, and
22 decided they wanted to buy one. And so, Bruce got training in
23 Missouri. When they wanted -- he wanted to buy one, Paul Salmon
24 referred him to me in Gulf Shores, Alabama. We do more sales and
25 builder's assists, and, and help to prepare (indiscernible) for

1 Orion, which is what we fly, mostly. And Bruce contacted me and
2 said, hey, I got my gyro rating with Paul and these guys in
3 Missouri, and I would like to buy an M24, so I helped him do that
4 as a gift.

5 He had to check into Gulf Shores and help them build; and,
6 and then, we started -- we got it airworthy in March, and I
7 started helping with the phase one testing at that point. Bruce
8 then came down in April, and we worked on phase one testing to
9 finish up the phase one testing, and he transitioned to the M24
10 Orion with me. He had gotten his rating in the, in the different
11 model, the M16 open Tandem, and so I wanted to be sure -- they do
12 have some differences, so I wanted to be sure that Bruce was
13 proficient in the M24 Orion, so I didn't, I didn't help him with
14 his rating. I'm a flight instructor and examiner for the FAA, but
15 I didn't need to do an exam. He got his sport pilot rating there,
16 and so already had a rating when he came to me, and I just helped
17 his transition to the M24 Orion. And he did great. He just
18 really, he just really took to it. He was real excited about
19 flying it.

20 Then, he came back. He had to try to reschedule when he
21 could come back to pick it up and fly it home, so we finished
22 phase one testing in April; and then, we did an oil change, and,
23 and we did a condition inspection. We used to do a complete
24 condition inspection following phase one just to make sure it's
25 ready to fly home. He called me and said he's ready to come get

1 it. He was arriving on Friday, last Friday. So, Thursday, I flew
2 it. I flew it two and a half hours on Thursday just to be sure
3 that everything was right on the aircraft, and it was, it's one of
4 the best I've flown. The (indiscernible), rotor balance, is
5 fantastic. It was really a great machine.

6 And then, he came on Friday. His flight was a little
7 delayed, so I didn't get a chance to talk to him much on Friday,
8 because he was wanting to get to Cape Girardeau, Missouri by --
9 before dark, which he did. And he said he, he would check in with
10 me at every leg. So, he called and said he had a great crosswind
11 landing in his first stop. His second stop was, was great. And
12 at the end of the day, in Cape Girardeau, he texted me and said,
13 he said, all good. He said, very pleased, was his exact words, on
14 his taxiing. I've got it recorded here. But very pleased with
15 his, with his trip flying, and everything went well. He was going
16 -- as far as I know, he was going to then fly home on Saturday,
17 but weather may have prevented that, and he left Sunday morning,
18 and that's when this occurred.

19 Q. Do you know what his route of flight was from Gulf Shores to
20 Cape Girardeau?

21 A. You know, I -- he did text me at his stops, so I do -- I
22 think I do have that on a text that I can -- I'm not very savvy
23 with a phone to pick it up and continue the conversation, but I
24 can, I can get it, and write it down, and send you. I know he, I
25 know he stopped at Bay Minette, and I don't know the identifier.

1 Q. (Indiscernible) Mark, what we can do is, why don't we -- I
2 just sent you an email, so when we hang up the phone, you can --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- put that together and just shoot me back the --

5 A. Great.

6 Q. -- stops that he made. Do you happen to know what his
7 planning was for his route from Cape Girardeau to South Dakota?

8 A. I don't. He just, he just indicated his -- to me, his plan
9 for his first leg to Cape Girardeau. I have no idea what his plan
10 was from there. But he was going to stop and spend time, I think,
11 with, with Paul, who had, you know, done his training, and maybe
12 review that next, that next part of the trip with him. I'm not
13 sure exactly.

14 Q. Okay. Okay, that's good. All right. So -- okay. So, did
15 you fly with him -- when was the last time you flew with him?

16 A. It was April, when he was down in April, and I don't have
17 the -- I left the log at the airport, so I don't have that exact
18 date. But I can get that for you, too, and email you the exact
19 date of our last, last few days of flying together.

20 Q. So, the last time you flew with him was during the phase one
21 testing or just after it?

22 A. Yeah, it was, I believe, right at the end of it, I think, we
23 flew, and maybe, maybe, maybe once after, but --

24 Q. And you said --

25 A. -- yeah, I sure --

1 Q. -- you guys did a condition inspection after that?

2 A. We did, yeah, and we typically do that. I, I like to make
3 sure. I, I, I've got a lot of, got a lot of time in these, and
4 probably several thousand hours. And so, I just want to make sure
5 before someone takes it home on a long cross-country that it's
6 good to go, and so, we typically do a condition inspection.

7 Q. Okay. Did you note that in the aircraft logbook?

8 A. I can't remember if I did or not, because it's his, it's --
9 as builder of record, it's his responsibility to record that
10 (indiscernible) he has the -- I don't know that he has the
11 repairman certificate yet or not, but in the first year of
12 operation, experimental category aircraft, he has the
13 responsibility and the, and the ability to do his own maintenance,
14 so --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And it's not, it's not a required thing at all. You know,
17 it's, it's just something that we do, change out brake and oil and
18 do a condition inspection.

19 Q. Okay. Okay. I didn't see anything in the logbook. I just
20 looked.

21 A. Yeah, okay. The aircraft log was there?

22 Q. Yeah, they were. So was his pilot log book. (Indiscernible).

23 A. Yeah, okay.

24 Q. -- put that in the -- let's see. There's the prop log.

25 Let's look at the engine logbook.

1 A. I would think the aircraft log would be the one that he would
2 have noted that in. Did he note the oil change at 25 hours or
3 whatever that was?

4 Q. Let me check that. No.

5 A. Not post. Okay.

6 Q. Yeah. There's a 15-hour prop and rotor bolt torque check.
7 Engine exam for leaks. That was signed by you, it looks like --

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. -- on March 16.

10 A. Okay.

11 Q. And then, the last one was the -- there's an entry that's
12 noted by the owner/builder. Oh, I think that was him, but he --
13 this says, flight testing was completed with the operating weight,
14 demonstrated air speed. This is just certification that the site
15 test hours have been completed. There's --

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. -- nothing after that.

18 A. Okay. Yeah. I've got, I've got -- we've got a house log
19 back at the airport that would have that information to when we
20 did that oil change and condition inspection, but if it's not
21 logged in the log, I don't know that that's --

22 Q. How is it even notated?

23 A. -- (indiscernible).

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. Right.

1 Q. I'll have to take a look --

2 A. Yeah, I --

3 Q. -- and see if that's something we can --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. -- (indiscernible) official --

6 A. I don't, I don't think so, either. It's not -- I mean,
7 (indiscernible) safety things that I insist on. I'm just kind of
8 bummed that we didn't get it recorded.

9 Q. Did you -- so, you flew with him -- can you estimate how many
10 hours you flew with him for?

11 A. I'm, I'm thinking it was more than 10 hours that we flew
12 together just transitioning. I've got the exact, got the exact
13 numbers for those, again, back at the airport in my log, so --

14 Q. Okay. The -- and, I mean, can you tell me about his flight
15 proficiency, strengths, weaknesses?

16 A. Yeah. He was, he was great. He was very (indiscernible). I
17 was surprised at how good he transitioned to the M24 Orions. It's
18 a (indiscernible) when his training was, was -- and rating, was
19 all in the M16 open Tandem, so he, he was just so, he was so
20 careful, and competent, and safe, and just a really bright,
21 charming guy. I've just been racking my brain trying to figure
22 out what happened, and I just can't think of any, any shortcoming,
23 really, that he had. Just really -- he just was real enthusiastic
24 about it, very interested in getting it right. He's, you know,
25 planning on taking his family and friend, and he just wanted to

1 really make sure was dialed in skillset wise. He was -- we did so
2 many take-off and landings just because he wanted to. And he just
3 was very skilled. I just can't think of anything where he was
4 distractible or, or, you know, short on skill, or, or -- I don't
5 know.

6 Q. How was he with the -- because you guys flew -- did you --
7 you guys flew in the M16 together, right?

8 A. I don't think we did fly in the M16 together.

9 Q. (Indiscernible)?

10 A. I think we --

11 Q. Yeah.

12 A. I think we just, he and I just flew in the M24. I've got an
13 M16 down here, but I think he -- I did all my flying with Bruce,
14 I'm quite certain, in the M24 Orion, unless his log book says
15 otherwise. I don't remember any M16 time.

16 Q. Okay. And you flew, you guys flew together, obviously, in
17 the accident aircraft for the phase one testing; but prior to
18 that, you guys flew in the M24, as well, right?

19 A. Yes. Yeah, I think we did. I think we had some M24 time
20 prior to him flying his.

21 Q. And it's the same avionics package with the Dynon?

22 A. Yes. Yeah, I think it, it would have been, because mine,
23 mine has the Dynon package, also.

24 Q. It does, the SkyView?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Is it really similar? Okay. All right.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And how was his handling flying with the, with the SkyView?

4 A. As far as I recall, he was, he was, he was good about it. We
5 spent a lot of time talking about head, you know, head outside the
6 cockpit and, and, and so, I just never noticed him really messing
7 with the panel during flight. But he would, he would get things
8 programed in on the ground and, and set up his flight. You know,
9 if we're going to, if we're going to make a flight to an airport
10 down here, he had it set up on the ground and ready to go, and,
11 yeah, he seemed like he was doing fine with it, seemed like he put
12 some time into studying the manuals, which is hard for people to
13 do. It's 900 pages of stuff. But he was that guy. I mean, he's
14 just very smart, very dedicated to, to learning something.

15 Q. Did he ever have any medical concerns or medical things that
16 he talked to you about?

17 A. None, none at all. He -- and he, you know, he seemed fit,
18 and, you know, just, just never discussed any, any kind of medical
19 concerns at all. Yeah, I don't, I don't recall any, any
20 conversation that we had regarding that. I can't remember if he
21 had renewed his medical or -- I know he went with the sport pilot
22 added rating, I believe, with Paul and those guys in Missouri, but
23 I don't remember if he did it because he didn't want to renew his
24 medical, or -- I don't know for sure. He may have a medical. I
25 talked about coming back and getting, getting his private pilot

1 add-on, I think.

2 Q. Actually, I think he has a private.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. Yeah. Okay. So -- okay, that's good to know. Anything else
5 you'd want to add?

6 A. I can't think of a thing, and I just would really like to
7 help figure this out. I'm just sick over it.

8 MR. STEIN: I get that, and I understand. Let's see. I'm
9 going to stop recording now.

10 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

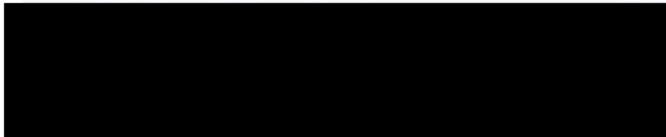
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL GYROCOPTER CRASH AT
 CAPE GIRARDEAU REGIONAL
 AIRPORT IN SCOTT COUNTY,
 MISSOURI ON MAY 22, 2022
 Interview of Mark Sprigg

ACCIDENT NO.: WPR22FA184

DATE: May 24, 2022

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Lisa Sevarino
Transcriber