

Pilot credentials will be investigated in fatal plane crash that killed two Gwinnett men

By Alice Queen

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COVINGTON — The National Transportation Safety Board said its investigation into a fatal plane crash in Covington will include scrutiny of the flight credentials of the two men who were killed.

“As the investigation moves forward... we will be taking a deep look into the three primary areas of an NTSB investigation — the pilot(s), the airplane and the operating environment,” said Peter Knudson in an email response to the Citizen.

Knudson said the agency will look into the pilots’ trainings, medical certificates, licenses and ratings.

The two men killed in the April 21 crash have been identified by the Covington

Police Department as Sergio Gill, a private pilot and flight instructor from Snellville, and student pilot Edward Rodriguez of Lawrenceville. The two were killed when the Cessna 340 they were flying crashed shortly after take-off from Covington Municipal Airport. The CPD said it is not known who was actually flying the plane at the time of the crash.

According to the Federal Aviation Administration website, Gill held a private pilot certificate issued in 2017 and was rated to fly single-engine aircraft. The Cessna 340 is a twin piston engine plane. The website did not indicate that Gill had a flight instructor certificate.

According to a preliminary report by the NTSB, Rodriguez and Gill had taken a commercial flight to Lubbock, Texas, on

April 21 to pick up the Cessna 340. According to Rodriguez’s partner, the two men had recently met, and Gill had told Rodriguez he could teach him to fly the plane.

The NTSB reported that the two men took off from DeKalb-Peachtree Airport at about 4:40 p.m. on April 21 and flew to Briscoe Field in Gwinnett County. From there, they took off and flew to the Lumpkin County-Wimpey’s Airport in Dahlonega. They departed Dahlonega at about 6:15 p.m. en route to Covington Municipal Airport.

Knudson previously said Gill and Rodriguez had been doing touch-and-go landings at the Covington airport before the crash occurred.

Touch and go landings are commonly used in pilot training. Pilots will configure

the plane to land, briefly touch down, and then quickly reconfigure the plane to take off without coming to a stop.

The NTSB preliminary report states that, “According to multiple witnesses in the vicinity of (Covington Airport), the airplane made a ‘hard right’ banking turn, started to spiral downward, and then impacted a row of parked, empty semi-truck trailers about 1 nautical mile southeast of (the airport). Parking lot surveillance video revealed the airplane descending in a right spin at the time of the impact. The airplane was destroyed by post-impact fire.”

There were no injuries on the ground. The airplane wreckage was collected by the NTSB for further examination. The NTSB’s final report is expected in 12 to 24 months.

By Curt Yeomans

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local fire and rescue officials have long warned residents to be careful on the Chattahoochee

River when water from Lake Lanier is released through Buford Dam because of the danger from rapidly rising and swift moving waters. But U.S. Rep. Carolyn Bourdeaux wants to see if more can be done to make river users aware of when water

is being released. Bourdeaux filed the Lake Lanier and Upper Chattahoochee River Safety Act this week to call on the Corps of Engineers to study potential dangers at recreational areas near Buford Dam and Lake Lanier. The Corps of Engineers has authority over Lake Lanier and the portion

particular in the summer months when more people are doing recreational activities on the river. The reports can come at any time of the year, however, since many people engage in fly fishing on the upper Chattahoochee. The release of water through the dam causes

the river because of people getting caught off guard by the rapid changes. There are ways to check the Buford Dam water release schedule through a special phone number (704-945-1466), by listening to 610 AM on the radio or by checking the release schedule online. The Corps of Engineers also has sirens located along the portion of the riv-

releases can vary, ranging from a few minutes to hours in advance. “In Georgia, we are fortunate to have policy makers who prioritize the importance of our water resources,” Atlanta Regional Commission Natural Resources Managing Director Katherine Zitsch said. “Protecting the wellbeing of people while they enjoy Lake Lanier and the



Carolyn Bourdeaux



Bourdeaux pushing legislation calling for review of safety efforts along upper Chattahoochee River

Bourdeaux checking the release schedule online. The Corps of Engineers also has sirens located along the portion of the river that is under its authority, but Bourdeaux's office said the amount of warning people receive about water

fishing on the upper Chattahoochee.

The release of water through the dam causes the water level to rapidly rise by several feet and the current to become swifter, and there have been fatalities on

Director Katherine Zitsch said. "Protecting the wellbeing of people while they enjoy Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee River allows Georgians to safely connect with these important natural resources."

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City of Lilburn has tentatively adopted a 2022 millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes by 28.31 percent.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearing on this tax increase to be held at Lilburn City Hall at 340 Main Street, Lilburn, Georgia, 30047, Wednesday, June 1, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 4.432 mills, an increase of .976 mills. Without this tentative increase, the millage rate will be no more than 3.454 mills. The proposed tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$200,000 is approximately \$73.35 and the proposed tax increase for a non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$200,000 is approximately \$78.24.

CITY OF LILBURN

The City of Lilburn City Council does hereby announce that the millage rate will be set at a meeting held in the Council Chambers at Lilburn City Hall at 340 Main Street, Lilburn, Georgia, 30047 on June 13, 2022 at 7:30 P.M., and pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 48-5-32 does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year's estimated tax rates along with the history of the tax rates and laws for the next five years.

Buford Dam and Lake Lanier. The Corps of Engineers has authority over Lake Lanier and the portion of the Chattahoochee River between Buford Dam and the State Route 20 Bridge in Sugar Hill.

"The Chattahoochee River features great recreational activities many of us enjoy," Bourdeaux said. "Unfortunately, activity at Buford Dam can lead to rapidly rising water levels with little to no warning. This study will help us keep the Chattahoochee River safe and accessible for all."

Reports about people getting trapped or swept away on the Chattahoochee River when water from Lake Lanier is released through Buford Dam are not uncommon in Gwinnett County,

Gwinnett County police looking for suspects who stole gun safe from a home in Sugarloaf Country Club

By Curt Yeomans
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Gwinnett County police are looking for two people who broke into a home in the Sugarloaf Country Club community last month and stole a gun safe, and later tried unsuccessfully to break into another home in the neighborhood.

The theft occurred on April 18. The suspects broke a glass door on the rear side of the home, stole the 200-pound

the suspects ran away as a result.

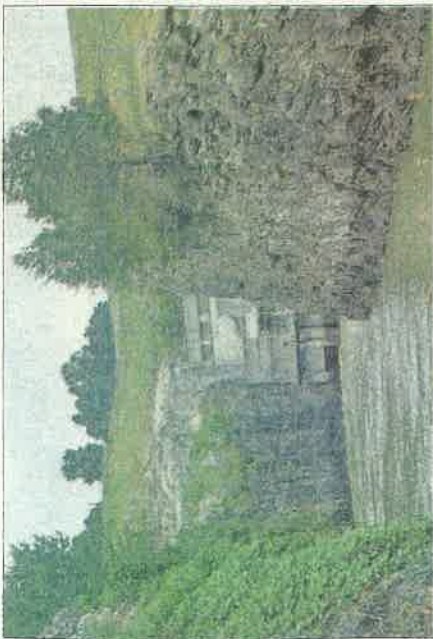
Anyone who knows the identity of the suspects or their whereabouts is asked to call detectives at 770-513-5300 or Crime Stoppers, which lets tipsters remain anonymous, at 404-577-8477. They can also visit www.stopcrimeATL.com.

There is a cash reward offered by Crime Stoppers for information that leads to an arrest and indictment. Tipsters are asked to reference case No. 220032931.



Suspect recently unknown.

The suspects tried to break into another home that was near the first one 10 days later, but police said the homeowner was alerted by a home camera system and



The power plant at Buford Dam is seen from Lower Pool West Park in this 2017 file photo. U.S. Rep. Carolyn Bourdeaux, D-Ga., has filed legislation to have the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers review safety at Buford Dam and along the upper Chattahoochee River. There are numerous reports each year of people getting trapped on the river when water releases from the dam causes the river's water level to rapidly rise and its current to become swifter. Dark marks on the rocks in the foreground show how high the water level can rise on the river.

