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LOCAL NEWS 

## Pilot training issue in Buffalo crash?

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 By Jim Hoffer

**BUFFALO, N.Y. (WABC) -- When the 45 passengers boarded Flight 3407 to buffalo, they had no way of knowing anything about the skill and experience of the pilot.**

They had no clue that [Captain Marvin Reslow](#) had a little more than one hundred hours behind the controls of the Q-400 turboprop plane.

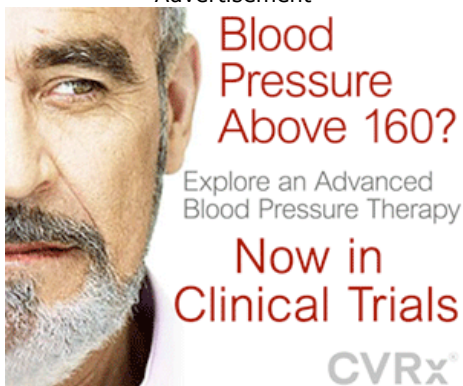
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They had no way of knowing he had flunked pilot proficiency tests five times.

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"It's very, very unusual," attorney Justin Green said.

Green, a former pilot, is an attorney with a firm representing 11 families who had loved ones on board.

"It is really scary that they hired someone with that many red marks against his

resume," Green said.

NTSB hearings, which begin on Tuesday, are likely to focus on inexperience and training, especially as it applies to the whether the pilot overreacted to the plane's stick-pusher. The stick-pusher automatically kicks in when a plane is about to stall, pointing the aircraft's nose down into a dive so it can pick up enough speed to allow the pilot to guide it to a recovery.

However, when [Flight 3407](#)'s stick-pusher kicked in on approach to Buffalo Niagara International Airport the night of Feb. 12, investigators said the pilot - Capt. Renslow - pulled back on the plane's control column, apparently trying to bring the aircraft out of the sudden dive by bringing the aircraft's nose up. Pushing forward to gain speed is the proper procedure.

Flight 3407 experienced an aerodynamic stall, rolled over and crashed into a house, killing all 49 people aboard and one man in the house.

Four years earlier, a jet crash by Colgan's parent company killed two pilots. The NTSB found "the flight crew's unfamiliarity with the stick-pusher system" a factor in that crash. The agency called for "additional training" to "improve pilot response to stick-pusher activation."  
"2004 you have pilots not trained properly and not reacting to the stick pusher. 2009 you have two pilots not trained properly and not reacting to the stick pusher. It's the same accident and they should have learned the lesson before," Green said.

Colgan released a statement saying Captain Renslow was "fully qualified" and had FAA "certification" plus 35-hundred areer total flight hours. Colgan added that all their pilots have "comprehensive training" on the stall warning system or stick pusher. That training and the airlines' judgment, which put Renslow behind the controls, will come under intense scrutiny

during this week's hearings.

"This is a real tragedy that should never have happened," Green said.

Besides his inexperience with the stick-pusher, Renslow had failed at least two flight simulator "check rides" administered by FAA during his employment at Colgan and several other check rides earlier in his career, sources said.

Colgan may not have known about the previous check ride failures because of a loophole in FAA requirements about what pilots must tell prospective employers, sources said.

Another issue to be probed at the hearing is whether the flight's first officer, Rebecca Shaw, was too fatigued to fly but failed to tell Colgan that because the work culture at the airline didn't encourage such disclosures, sources said.

Shaw had been a passenger on a red eye flight the previous night from Seattle, where she lived with her parents, in order to be at Newark Liberty International Airport for the flight to Buffalo. She also had a cold and was suffering from congestion, sources said.

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*Some information from The Associated Press included in this story.*

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