

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**  
Vehicle Recorder Division

July 26, 2019

## **Air Traffic Control Transcript**

**Specialist's Factual Report**  
**By Peyton Hooker**

### **1. EVENT SUMMARY**

Location: Flushing, New York  
Date: March 11, 2018  
Aircraft: Airbus Helicopter AS350 B3, Registration N350LH  
Operator: Liberty Helicopters Inc.  
NTSB Number: ERA18MA099

On March 11, 2018, about 1908 eastern daylight time (EDT), an American Eurocopter Corp (Airbus Helicopters) AS350 B2, N350LH, was substantially damaged when it impacted the East River and subsequently rolled inverted after the pilot reported a loss of engine power near New York, New York. The pilot egressed from the helicopter and sustained minor injuries. The five passengers did not egress and were fatally injured. The scheduled 30-minute, doors-off aerial photography flight was operated by Liberty Helicopters, Inc., on behalf of FlyNYON under the provisions of Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 91. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed for the flight, which originated from Helo Kearny Heliport (65NJ), Kearny, New Jersey about 1900.

## 2. TRANSCRIPT

### LEGEND

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>N350LH</b>  | Radio transmission from N350LH (accident aircraft)         |
| <b>SOUTH</b>   | LaGuardia ATCT Class Bravo airspace South                  |
| <b>N351LH</b>  | Radio transmission from N351LH                             |
| <b>N355AG</b>  | Radio transmission from N355AG                             |
| <b>N27WA</b>   | Radio transmission from N27WA                              |
| <b>UNKNOWN</b> | Radio transmission from unidentified aircraft on frequency |
| <b>PD20</b>    | New York Police Department Aviation                        |
| <b>[ ]</b>     | Editorial insertion  |

Note 1: Time is expressed in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)

Note 2: Only transmissions relevant to the accident are transcribed

Note 3: Phonetic representation of words are included to represent recorded communication

**TIME and  
SOURCE**

**AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION CONTENT**

22:33:00

**START OF TRANSCRIPT**

(22:33:00—23:03:27) [skip]

23:03:37

**N350LH** and LaGuardia good evening helicopter three five zero lima hotel

23:03:41

**SOUTH** helicopter three five zero lima hotel LaGuardia Tower squawk zero two zero five say position and request

23:03:46

**N350LH** zero two zero five Newtown Creek nine hundred like to take it up the East River on station north end Central Park south of the extended centerline three one at all times at two thousand if able for uh zero lima hotel

23:04:00

**SOUTH** zero lima hotel uh you're cleared in Class Bravo airspace as requested at or below two thousand the altimeter's three zero zero six just remain south of the extended centerline of uh thirty one

23:04:07

**N350LH** all right cleared in two thousand south of the centerline and we got alpha golf over there we'll maintain visual for zero lima hotel

23:04:13

**SOUTH** approved thank you

23:04:45

**N351LH** LaGuardia copter three five one lima hotel Spuyten Duyvil one thousand requesting south on the river one point five and handoff to Newark landing at Kearny

23:04:54

**SOUTH** and it's uh three five one lima hotel

23:04:57

**N351LH** affirmative

23:04:58

**SOUTH** three five one lima hotel squawk zero two one one and ident caut— just use caution company's on the uh frequency zero lima hotel

23:05:04

**N351LH** zero two one one we've got that one lima hotel

23:05:12

**SOUTH** lima hotel your radar contact at a thousand you just wanna go southbound via Hudson

**TIME and  
SOURCE**

**AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION CONTENT**

23:05:16  
**N351LH** gonna run the Hudson yeah handoff to Newark for landing Kearny

23:05:18  
**SOUTH** roger

23:05:42  
**SOUTH** one lima hotel climb and maintain one thousand five hundred

23:05:45  
**N351LH** point five lima hotel

23:05:57  
**SOUTH** helicopter five alpha golf traffic's at the uh North Tip northwest bound over the uh park helicopter two thousand

23:06:03  
**N355AG** I'm sorry alpha golf someone's talking one more time

23:06:05  
**SOUTH** yeah traffic's at North Tip northwest bound over the park helicopter two thousand

23:06:09  
**N351AG** tally ho we'll maintain visual be south of them alpha golf

23:06:13  
**SOUTH** five alpha golf thank you

23:06:14  
**N27WA** LaGuardia two seven whiskey alpha with you uh four north of—three north of Van Cortlandt one thousand

23:06:20  
**SOUTH** two seven whiskey alpha LaGuardia Tower squawk zero two three three and say request

23:06:23  
**N27WA** zero two three three Van Cortlandt Harlem River East River crossing Midtown south of the Empire State Building northbound Hudson River we'll check out G-W White Plains

23:06:31  
**SOUTH** seven whiskey alpha cleared Class Bravo airspace as requested at or below seven hundred on the Harlem—up higher once you get uh a little south here and uh again the altimeter is three zero zero six

**TIME and  
SOURCE**

**AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION CONTENT**

23:06:41  
**N27WA** LaGuardia—

23:06:41  
**N350LH** LaGuardia may—

23:06:43  
**N350LH** —uh zero lima hotel

23:06:44  
**N27WA** —we're gonna check out on the Hudson River once we're across Midtown

23:06:48  
**SOUTH** zero lima hotel roger just advise around when you're gonna check out

23:06:50  
**N27WA** you got it

23:06:55  
**SOUTH** Newark LaGuardia APREQ

23:06:58  
**N350LH** zero lima hotel Mayday Mayday Mayday

23:07:01  
**SOUTH** [voices heard in background on interphone line]

23:07:04  
**SOUTH** zero lima hotel LaGuardia you okay

23:07:07  
**N350LH** East River engine failure

23:07:09  
**SOUTH** I'm sorry say again

23:07:11  
**N350LH** East River engine failure

23:07:14  
**SOUTH** it's coming a little broken say it one more time

23:07:16  
**N355AG** he had an engine failure over the East River lima hotel

23:07:19  
**SOUTH** okay uh you require any assistance

23:07:24  
**UNKNOWN** it was a Mayday call LaGuardia

**TIME and  
SOURCE**

**AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION CONTENT**

23:07:26  
**SOUTH** okay got it

23:07:29  
**SOUTH** one lima hotel continue southbound and contact Newark Tower one two seven point eight five

23:07:33  
**N351LH** seven eight five one lima

23:07:39  
**N355AG** LaGuardia did you have his position at the—the last position reported for him

23:07:42  
**SOUTH** yeah I do thank you

23:07:44  
**N355AG** thank you

23:09:11  
**SOUTH** five alpha golf LaGuardia

23:09:12  
**N355AG** yes sir go ahead

23:09:14  
**SOUTH** you uh see lima hotel down there in the uh East River

23:09:17  
**N355AG** no sir um we're gonna make this pass and we're gonna do a run down the East River and look for him did um N-Y-P-D get notified please they have some police boats out

23:09:26  
**SOUTH** yeah they uh we're on the phone with them now

23:09:28  
**N355AG** thank you very much appreciate that

23:09:29  
**SOUTH** yeah just trying to get a uh exact location he was at the North Tip uh last when I saw him

23:10:05  
**SOUTH** seven whiskey alpha after Harlem what do you want to do

23:10:08  
**N27WA** we are going to take it across Midtown south of the Empire State Building if you need any assistance before we turn uh let me know

**TIME and  
SOURCE**

**AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION CONTENT**

23:10:14  
**SOUTH** you're going to take the uh East River going down that way

23:10:17  
**N27WA** yes sir yes sir

23:10:18  
**SOUTH** all right just let me know if you see anything in the uh East River uh zero lima hotel reported going down over by the uh North Tip

23:10:23  
**N27WA** copy that we'll uh we'll um hold up on station once we pick em up make sure everybody's okay

23:10:29  
**SOUTH** thanks

23:11:13  
**SOUTH** five alpha golf traffic two south of the five line appears uh northbound indicates five hundred type unknown

23:11:18  
**N355AG** thank you alpha golf and uh we have him in sight will maintain a visual

23:11:22  
**SOUTH** five alpha golf approved thank you

23:12:10  
**N355AG** LaGuardia five alpha golf if you don't mind if we could shoot over to North Tip of uh Roosevelt take a look for him please

23:12:15  
**SOUTH** five alpha golf that's approved look for traffic helicopter North Tip southbound a helicopter currently at six hundred he's going to be up here uh climbing up shortly

23:12:23  
**N355AG** thank you alpha golf

23:12:27  
**N27WA** LaGuardia two seven whiskey alpha is uh directly above the uh the uh the uh site and it appears the aircraft is inverted in the water

23:12:36  
**SOUTH** roger thank you

23:12:42  
**SOUTH** seven whiskey alpha will let everyone know thank you

23:12:45  
**N27WA** uh the aircraft is upside down

**TIME and  
SOURCE**

**AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION CONTENT**

23:12:48  
**SOUTH** roger we're relay-relaying the information now thank you

23:12:51  
**N27WA** a boat is pulling up on scene right now

23:12:53  
**SOUTH** roger thank you

(23:12:55—23:13:55) [skip]

23:13:55  
**N27WA** LaGuardia seven whiskey alpha at the uh scene there's uh one uh looks like just a pilot there so uh he's out he's uh on top of the uh aircraft

23:14:04  
**SOUTH** okay

23:14:07  
**N27WA** and we're going to proceed they have uh people on scene

23:14:10  
**SOUTH** okay

23:14:14  
**N355AG** alpha golf concur and um there's a there's a boat with him now thank you so much for your help sir

23:14:18  
**SOUTH** thank you

23:14:31  
**N355AG** and alpha golf if you don't mind if we hold this squawk and we're gonna go back to uh Fifth Avenue filming and um if he's the only person in that aircraft um it looks like it's a—it's a good scene

23:14:41  
**SOUTH** okay five alpha golf roger proceed as requested look for a helicopter just uh coming up above you fifteen hundred feet he'll be going uh westbound shortly

23:14:48  
**N355AG** yes sir we have him and we also have the aircraft ahead of us that was uh just leaving the scene as well

23:14:52  
**SOUTH** okay thank you

23:14:53  
**N355AG** and we'll maintain visual alpha golf



**TIME and  
SOURCE**

**AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION CONTENT**

(23:14:55—23:18:41) [skip]

23:18:41

**PD20** LaGuardia Tower finest twenty

23:18:41

**SOUTH** alright five alpha golf proceed as uh—just remain outside that Trump T-F-R for me

23:18:49

**N355AG** uh we have permission to uh enter the T-F-R and uh you guys have the clearance on file there and I verified it

23:18:54

**SOUTH** okay thank you then

23:18:55

**SOUTH** finest twenty LaGuardia altimeter three zero zero six uh proceed uh directly to the site you going to the North Tip

23:19:04

**PD20** LaGuardia finest twenty

23:19:05

**SOUTH** finest twenty LaGuardia Tow—LaGuardia Tower altimeter three zero zero six

23:19:10

**PD20** three zero zero six uh Ridgewood seven hundred like to be on station in the vicinity of the uh Triborough uh just confirm where that uh incident happened

23:19:17

**SOUTH** finest twenty proceed as requested and it's uh around the uh around the North Tip

23:19:22

**PD20** uh roger that's where we're going and uh would like a thousand uh if we could

23:19:25

**SOUTH** finest twenty proceed as requested

23:19:27

**PD20** as requested finest twenty

(23:19:28—23:21:35) [skip]

23:21:35

**SOUTH** finest twenty helicopter about uh—about your twelve o'clock and a half mile southbound fifteen hundred has you in sight

**TIME and**  
**SOURCE**

**AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION CONTENT**

23:21:43

**PD20** in sight maintaining visual sep uh finest twenty on station

(23:21:45—23:52:00) [skip]

23:52:00

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**