

**Attachment 18. Day Mechanic Transcript**

**DCA12MA020 Maintenance Factual Report**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SUNDANCE HELICOPTER ACCIDENT  
NEAR LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

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Docket No.: DCA-12-MA-020

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: JOHN PAULSON

Sundance Helicopters  
5596 Haven Street  
Las Vegas, Nevada

Saturday,  
December 10, 2011

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: KRISTI DUNKS  
Senior Air Safety Investigator

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MS. DUNKS: Okay. So, just so we can kind of go over it.

I didn't have a chance to talk with you yesterday and kind of give you an overview of what we do. But, I'm the maintenance group chairman, so my job and my group's job is to document all the maintenance that occurred on the helicopter, you know, including the inspections and work that happened right before the accident.

So, in conjunction with that, we're talking to the mechanics that worked on the helicopter most recently. And we received your name that you had done the adjustment, I guess, on the hydraulic belt, so we'll be talking about that.

MR. PAULSON: Okay.

MS. DUNKS: You know, at this point, we have investigators in different groups, you know, working on scene and trying to determine, you know, what might have happened. But we don't have anything definitive yet.

So, the interview today is being recorded. And so, what will happen is at the conclusion of the interview, a transcript will be created and we'll share that, you know, with Sundance and you're, you know, more than welcome to have a copy.

So, just be aware that anything that you do say becomes public information so, you know, the NTSB, as an agency, we don't hide information. And the transcript will likely become, you know, an attachment to the accident report. So, just keep that in mind.

1 And did you want to have a representative here today?

2 MR. PAULSON: No.

3 MS. DUNKS: No. Okay.

4 All right. And that's, you know, completely up to you.

5 So before we begin, do you have any questions?

6 MR. PAULSON: No.

7 MS. DUNKS: Okay.

8 MR. PAULSON: I know what's going on.

9 MS. DUNKS: Okay. Very good. And if you do have  
10 questions during this, or if you want to take a break, just let me  
11 know.

12 MR. PAULSON: Okay.

13 MS. DUNKS: We're very flexible.

14 INTERVIEW OF JOHN PAULSON

15 BY MS. DUNKS:

16 Q. So, start out with an easy one. If you could say your  
17 full name and spell it for us, please.

18 A. It's John Alan Paulson. J-o-h-n, A-l-a-n, P-a-u-l-s-o-  
19 n.

20 Q. Thank you. And what sort of FAA certificates do you  
21 hold?

22 A. I have an air training (indiscernible) certificate.

23 Q. Okay. And can you briefly explain your aviation  
24 background, kind of when you got started and history?

25 A. My background started when I was in the military. In

1 1987 I was a U860 crew chief in the Army. I did that for 5 years  
2 or so. Got out, did some government contract work doing the same  
3 thing I was doing in the Army.

4 Kind of saw that I needed to -- where I wanted to go in  
5 aviation, that I needed to have an A&P license because that's all  
6 government contract stuff. You don't have to have a license to  
7 work -- to work those jobs. So, I got my initial A&P license in  
8 1997 and I went to work for some contract companies after that.  
9 Ended up moving to Vegas in '99. And that also kind of took me to  
10 the fixed wing side of the house, business jets I was working on.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I actually worked here at Sundance about 9 years ago,  
13 initially, for about a year. And then I ended up going next door  
14 to General Dynamics Gulfstream and I was there until 2008 where I  
15 got a part of -- was caught up in the lay-offs. I was part of  
16 middle management over there. Caught up in the lay-offs. Was out  
17 of work for 4 months. Went to California. Found a job there.  
18 Things didn't really work out in California. It's very expensive  
19 there if you've never been. Decided to move back to Vegas because  
20 I have some roots here and that was about a year ago.

21 And I've known Kyle the whole time since I was here  
22 before. And he had a position that was open, so I applied for it  
23 and was hired.

24 Q. Okay. And so, when did you come back?

25 A. January of 2011.

1 Q. Okay. And your function and title within Sundance is as  
2 an A&P mechanic?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. And do you have any inspection authorizations  
5 here?

6 A. I do not. Something I've been working on. I've got all  
7 the books and everything to actually to test and I'm actually  
8 studying for it right now.

9 Q. Okay. On the inspection authorization?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. All right. And can you talk a little bit about  
12 your background working on -- with Eurocopter Products?

13 A. Well, that started 9 years ago when I was here at  
14 Sundance. I actually worked on the night crew that they had at  
15 the time. I believe we had 11 A-Stars and two Bells. And I was  
16 part of the inspection crew. I used to -- we did the inspections,  
17 100 hours, 500 hours. I believe we viewed the inspection too;  
18 G&Ps. And then since I've come back, I was actually on a night  
19 crew again on an inspection crew doing the exact same thing.

20 Q. Okay. And within that -- so you had from 9 years ago  
21 and then you came back January of this year, did any of your  
22 employment in between that time involve A-Stars?

23 A. Nope. It was all (indiscernible).

24 Q. Okay. And so now can you explain your job duties with  
25 Sundance?



1 A. Right now, I'm on the day crew.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. So, my job is pretty much in the morning when I come in  
4 to make sure that the morning flights go off as they should. If  
5 there's any issues on the line, we're contacted by the pilots. We  
6 usually meet with the pilot, figure out what they're talking about  
7 when there's still a problem with the helicopter and then address  
8 the issues that they have.

9 Q. Okay. And so, working the day shift, what is your  
10 normal schedule?

11 A. About 5:30 to 2 or so. It kind of depends in the  
12 afternoon on if -- if we have to stay later for, like, in the  
13 middle of the project and we can't pass it to the guys that are  
14 coming on crew, we'll stay on and finish the job so that we don't  
15 have to do any kind of passing.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. If it's something that we can finish, you know, in an  
18 hour, couple of hours.

19 Q. Okay. And that would generally -- so you would work  
20 your shift and what would be the maximum amount, I guess, of time  
21 that you would exceed your normal shift?

22 A. Umm --

23 Q. Generally.

24 A. Probably if we stayed overtime, probably 2 hours.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Usually it didn't go beyond that.

2 Q. And do you have any Turbomeca or Eurocopter factory  
3 training?

4 A. I have Turbomeca training.

5 Q. Okay and when was that?

6 A. That was in -- I'd have to look at the records. I think  
7 it's 2003 and maybe February of 2003.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. And that was, I think, a level 1 and 2.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I think it was level 1 and 2 maintenance, line  
12 maintenance, was what it was.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I have other training.

15 Q. Yeah. Why don't you tell us about that; what your other  
16 training has been.

17 A. Other training consists of Hawker 800 -- 800XP  
18 maintenance initial given by flight safety. Also been a Citation  
19 Ten maintenance initial engine run attack. Also Gulf Stream, G4,  
20 maintenance initial engine run attack.

21 Q. Any other helicopter other than what you did in the  
22 military?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. Factory schools, no.

1 Q. Okay. And to kind of back up a little bit, so you had  
2 your initial employment here and then you came back in January.  
3 And can you talk about -- I've spoken with Kyle a little bit about  
4 the kind of indoctrination program that new mechanics would have  
5 when they come here. Can you kind of talk about that and when you  
6 immersed yourself back into Sundance, what the training was like  
7 and --

8 A. Umm, well, I think for me, because I had been here  
9 before, it was trying to get up to speed on how Sundance had  
10 changed from when I was here last; how the maintenance department  
11 had changed. It was really the differences between those and then  
12 understanding the differences and how they -- and how they worked.

13 There's also one of the things that changed when I came back  
14 was the -- the schedules had changed from when they used to be 7  
15 on/7 off; to a 4 on/3 off; 3 on/4 off.

16 Q. And procedure-wise from your experience in 2000 -- or  
17 when you were here and then came back, what were some of the major  
18 things that changed?

19 A. One of the things for me that changed was actually the  
20 way the maintenance manuals were set up.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. The maintenance manuals before were, I thought, were a  
23 little convoluted with the Eurocopter manuals. But they went to  
24 the new manuals that Eurocopter had come out with. They also had  
25 a lot of the stuff that was on the computer, which, you know,

1 coming from where I had been with Gulfstream, I mean, that was  
2 pretty much the standard. Everything is on the computer. So, you  
3 know, it makes it a little bit easier to look it up. Also, a  
4 little easier to keep it up to date with various revisions and  
5 stuff like that.

6 Q. Okay. Anything else?

7 A. No. I think that's it.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. I think that one of the other things, too, was that when  
10 I was here before, (indiscernible) all the aircraft -- well, not  
11 all of them, but most of them were BAs and then all the aircraft  
12 had been modded (ph.) to B2s.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And, of course, you know, the kind of differences that  
15 that made, but --

16 Q. Okay. All right. And the days leading up to the  
17 morning of December 7, what was your schedule like and kind of  
18 what were you doing? Were you working the days before? --

19 A. Let's see. That was on Wednesday, right?

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

21 A. I had Sunday and Monday off.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I worked Tuesday. Tuesday was just a normal day.  
24 Tuesday was just a normal day. I was in at 5:30, out at 2.

25 Q. Okay.

1           A.    Went home and completed some schoolwork.

2           Q.    All right.  And then the December 7, on Thursday -- or  
3 what was it, Wednesday morning, that you came into work.  And can  
4 you kind of talk about that for me?

5           A.    You know, so much has happened since then.  I've kind of  
6 -- they told me I was coming in here; try to replay everything  
7 that happened.

8                   Typically, what we try to do is we try to be down here  
9 early in the morning, 6:00, because the first flights go out at  
10 7:00.  And that's typically when the maintenance flights go out.

11                   So, as I recall, we came down here.  We was down here,  
12 and what I mean "down here," is myself, Lloyd, and Oliver, who  
13 were the other two guys that are on the shift with me.

14                   We came down here.  There were some issues out on the  
15 line, maybe some engine oil, maybe it wasn't quite up to the full  
16 mark that we inspect.  We ended up going out and servicing.  And I  
17 knew that 3-7 had had the inspections done on it, which had been  
18 done on (indiscernible) Tuesday.

19                   And sometime during the morning, Lloyd came up to me and  
20 said that we needed to go over and look at the belt on 3-7.  I  
21 think it was this.  And I don't remember exactly what Lloyd was  
22 doing, but when he told me that, you know, I kind of took that as  
23 him saying, "Hey, go over there and check that out," so I did.

24           Q.    Okay.  And what do you do when you do that?

25           A.    Well, the first thing I do is, you know, I try to get in

1 my mind when they're -- depending on who I'm hearing it from, if  
2 I'm hearing it from Lloyd, hear it from the pilot, they've  
3 actually seen it. So, I just try to process on what it is they're  
4 actually seeing.

5           So, when I got up to the helicopter, what I did is I  
6 opened up the transmission column and, you know, just looked at it  
7 to see if it looked loose. And as I recall, this particular one  
8 did look like it was loose. Because you can kind of tell with the  
9 way that the pulley's routed on if it's -- if there's like a  
10 little loop in it or if it's a straight shot. You can kind of  
11 tell if it's tight enough.

12           Q. Okay.

13           A. And so, as I recall, this one seemed to me like it was a  
14 little loose. And when I reached up and I put my finger on the  
15 tension, I mean, it was loose.

16           Q. Okay. Okay. So, you confirmed it was loose, first  
17 visually it sounds like, and then by actually touching the belt  
18 and moving it. And so then what do you do after that?

19           A. Well, the next thing I do is try to figure out why it  
20 loosened up. Looked at the bolts to make sure that they were  
21 tight. And they looked tight. There were slippage marks. I  
22 remember looking at them and I remember them being green slippage  
23 marks on them because that's one of the things our inspectors do.  
24 They have their own color that they actually mark bolts with. So  
25 I remember looking at the slippage marks and there were slippage

1 marks.

2           The next thing that I thought about was if the belt had  
3 gotten damaged at all; if there was any kind of damage. Because I  
4 do, do ground rounds after they push the aircraft out, so the next  
5 thing I did, is I got a flashlight and I kind of looked where it  
6 routs and went out there to make sure that the belt didn't look  
7 like it was damaged or cut or anything like that. And it didn't.

8           It was about that time I realized that I didn't have a  
9 torque wrench, so I asked Oliver to go down to the hangar and get  
10 me a torque wrench. And while he went down to the hangar, I  
11 loosened the bolts up, re-checked the belt again to make sure that  
12 it was okay. Made sure that it was routed around wholly on the  
13 inside and on the outside. And then bolted it tight; tightened  
14 it back up. Checked the tension to make sure that it was as it  
15 should be.

16           Q. And -- okay. So, you loosened the bolts, checked the  
17 belt again just to make sure it's good, and then you tighten it  
18 up, tighten the bolts. And then when you're verifying the  
19 tightness, how do you do that?

20           A. The maintenance manual calls out for I believe it's 1.35  
21 pounds plus or minus. It's like 2.25. And that's the actual  
22 poundage on the belt. And the deflection has to be so much. And  
23 I believe the deflection on the belt is somewhere close to like a  
24 tenth of an inch.

25           So, it's a process of trying to, you know, seeing what

1 your -- you know, to get an idea of, you know, 2 pounds of  
2 pressure and it being deflected to about a tenth of an inch. It's  
3 actually -- it's -- I don't know, it's kind of one of those things  
4 that -- that, you know, the way it's written in the manual is kind  
5 of, to me, it seems a little vague. But --

6 Q. To check the tension on the belt?

7 A. Well, not really to check the tension on the belt, but  
8 just the way it's written. Some of the things in the Eurocopter  
9 manual because they're initially written in French and then when  
10 they're translated to English, it's actually an understanding of  
11 what -- You know, when I did it, I mean, there was no question in  
12 my mind that I had done it as it should be. I mean, that's the  
13 way that I've done it since I've worked here.

14 Q. Okay. All right. And just to go over the procedure  
15 again, because I've never done the tension on a belt like this.  
16 So, just to make sure I understand.

17 So, you have a movement requirement and then you also  
18 have a pound requirement that's specified in the manual. And when  
19 you're checking that, it's your estimate as a mechanic what that  
20 is? You don't use specialized tooling to measure that, is that  
21 correct?

22 A. I'd say that's correct.

23 Q. Okay. And were you able to tell that morning why -- it  
24 sounds like you did some checks, but were you able to tell why it  
25 was loose in the first place?



1           A.    No.  I couldn't.  It wasn't -- I didn't check the torque  
2   on the bolts before I loosened them.  But I wasn't sure -- I mean,  
3   I didn't check, so I don't really know why it was loose.

4           Q.    Okay.

5           A.    All I know is when I got to it, it was loose.

6           Q.    It was obviously --

7           A.    It was obviously loose.

8           Q.    Okay.  Okay.  So, you completed this task.  And I assume  
9   -- did you speak with the check pilot or how did you --

10          A.    What I did is the next thing after, after I completed  
11   it, I had -- I still had the cowl up and I was waiting for the  
12   torque wrench to come down, because I had just snugged the bolts  
13   down.  I hadn't torqued them.  I had waited for the torque wrench  
14   to come down.  And I still had the cowl up and I believe that  
15   that's when Andre came out and he asked me if it was okay.  You  
16   know, I don't know if it was Andre.  But somebody came out to me  
17   and asked me if I was done, and I said, "Yeah.  I looked at it."  
18   I said, "I tensioned it back up."  I said, "I'm just waiting for  
19   the torque wrench to torque it back."

20          Q.    Okay.

21          A.    So, while I was waiting for that, I went to the logbook.  
22   I made sure that the write-up was in the logbook.  I put in my  
23   sign-off in the logbook.  Waited for the torque wrench to come  
24   down.  Once I got the torque wrench, torqued it to, I think it was  
25   195 inch pounds.  And once I torqued it, rotated it to make sure

1 that it was still lined up on the pulleys, and then closed the  
2 engine cowl. Put my signature on the block.

3 The next thing I did is I turned around and I looked for  
4 Lloyd because Lloyd is the inspector.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Him and I are both actually inspectors. And -- But  
7 that's one thing that we do is whenever one does a job, the other  
8 one comes behind and looks at it and then initials the block. So,  
9 I went and found Lloyd, I said, "Hey, do me a favor. Go over  
10 there and look at that and, you know, tell me what you think.  
11 Tell me, you know, if it looks good to you."

12 So, he went over there. He opened up the cowl, checked  
13 it out. Said it was good. Put his initials next to mine.

14 Q. Okay. And is that a required inspection item based on  
15 your procedures here? Are there certain items that you need to  
16 have a second set of eyes on per your maintenance manual?

17 A. On that particular one, any time we're putting a torque  
18 on something, what we like to do is get an inspector on there and  
19 actually --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- actually look at everything. We try to get an  
22 inspector on everything.

23 Q. Okay. And again, when he verifies that setting, it's --  
24 he's doing the same check that you had done with the pressure --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- and then with (indiscernible)?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. He'll get in there and check exactly what I did to make  
5 sure that -- that my estimation of what it is, is where it should  
6 be.

7 Q. Okay. Okay and you said you put an entry in the  
8 logbook. Is that the maintenance log page?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And --

11 A. Flight log. Yeah.

12 Q. Okay, and so that would have been in the helicopter  
13 because it was --

14 A. It was in the helicopter that they were flying.

15 Q. Okay. For that day?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. So, that's gone. And at the time Lloyd came over  
18 and requested your assistance on this hydraulic belt, were you  
19 working on something else or --

20 A. Umm, I don't remember. I don't remember because I was  
21 up by the -- I was up by the hangar and I just remember him coming  
22 by saying, "Hey, look at the belt on 3-7." And so I was like,  
23 okay, I went right to it. And because typically in the morning,  
24 you know, we get a lot of pilots coming up and saying, hey, you  
25 know, can you take a look at this, can you take a look at that?

1           So, I'm sure that there were probably other squawks that  
2 I was right in the middle of doing when he said that. I just  
3 don't remember what those were.

4           Q.    Okay. And on the -- on 3-7, was there anything else  
5 that you were asked to do?

6           A.    That was the only thing.

7           Q.    Okay. And so once Lloyd verified that your work was  
8 good, then he also would sign the maintenance log, or --

9           A.    Yes, he would either -- if he had a stamp with him, he  
10 would stamp, put a stamp by my name or a stamp in the block. If  
11 he didn't have his stamp with him, he'd put his initials there.

12          Q.    Okay. And then the helicopter would be basically looked  
13 at by the pilot and --

14          A.    Yes.

15          Q.    -- for the check flight. Okay.

16          A.    And then released to go on the check flight.

17          Q.    Okay. Do you know about how long it took you to  
18 complete that work?

19          A.    Maybe 15 minutes from start to finish; 15, 20 minutes  
20 from start to finish.

21          Q.    Okay. And you've gone over what was done, but did you  
22 encounter any problems when you were doing it?

23          A.    No. It was actually pretty straightforward. I mean,  
24 there didn't -- there didn't seem to be any issues. I mean, I  
25 didn't see anything glaring why the belt would have been loose. I

1 mean, I have seen it at times where sometimes that belt gets  
2 routed over the pulley, kind of across the threads. And so,  
3 that's typically what makes it come loose is that it gets tensions  
4 the first time with it over the pulley.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. But, you know, I checked around. I mean, that's, you  
7 know, that's kind of what I've been taught in my aviation career  
8 is that, you know, pretty much if you're going to look at  
9 something, you're just not focused on that one thing. You're  
10 going to look around in the area to make sure that it's not  
11 something else that caused that problem, you know. You don't want  
12 to have that tunnel vision.

13 Q. Sure. And you've given us some numbers that you were  
14 using. What sort of guidance do you use to perform?

15 A. The maintenance manual.

16 Q. Okay. And do you have those with you out on the ramp,  
17 or --

18 A. No. I have them on my computer.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. So, I actually have the split vision program on my  
21 computer that I pull up every morning. Usually the first thing I  
22 do when I get to work is I open my computer up, pull it up so I  
23 have it up on the screen so that I can take a look at it when I  
24 need to.

25 Q. Okay. And for that procedure would it be something

1 where you would have your computer out on the ramp with you or --

2 A. It would be in the hangar.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. We also have the same manuals on the computer that's in  
5 our office in here.

6 Q. Um-hum. Okay. So, it's your personal computer, but  
7 you're able to update it with current manuals?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Would you say adjusting the tension on the belt is a  
10 common maintenance activity that you conduct, or --?

11 A. I would say that it is, yes. I mean, when I was on the  
12 inspection crew, that's all I did for -- I mean, it was one of the  
13 jobs that I was always doing. While I was on the inspection  
14 crews, I was on the tail. And, typically that's like everything  
15 that was from the tail of the aircraft all the way up to the --  
16 where the -- it comes out of the transmission.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Where the engine is actually connected to the  
19 transmission, so all that stuff there I try to take care of all  
20 that stuff. So, it was something that I've probably done that job  
21 many, many times.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I mean, part of the other things that -- that we look  
24 at, you know, like the one thing that I thought about too was  
25 about the bearing on the hydraulic pump to make sure that it

1 didn't -- something didn't happen to it because that was another  
2 thing that I looked at while I was -- while I was up there. I  
3 specifically remember doing that.

4 Q. Okay. And anything else when you were doing that work  
5 that you noted, or was remarkable?

6 A. No. That's something that I've kind of been thinking  
7 about ever since I heard what happened is like, you know,  
8 something that was there that I could have -- you know, that I  
9 could have seen while I was looking in that area. And --

10 Q. Okay. Okay. I've worked through all my questions. And  
11 now what I'd like to do is just kind of go around the table and  
12 see what follow-up questions that we have.

13 And, I'll start with Malcolm, if that's okay.

14 BY MR. BRENNER:

15 Q. Great. What time did this happen? What time of morning  
16 was it?

17 A. Probably 6:30, 6:45.

18 Q. How was work flow at that time? How would you  
19 characterize that?

20 A. I don't think it was particularly heavy. The day before  
21 was heavy, but that morning it seemed -- I just remember the  
22 typical squawks that we have that we have to do in the morning.  
23 It's, you know, maybe the pilots having issues with, you know,  
24 engine oil or something or maybe the guys at night missed  
25 something.

1 Q. And what was hard to understand in the manual that you  
2 mentioned?

3 A. Well, not that there was anything hard to understand.  
4 It's just that sometimes the translations when they come in from  
5 the French to the English --

6 Q. Sure.

7 A. -- are a little difficult. I mean, I took French in  
8 school, so I understand how the language is laid out. And so,  
9 it's a little -- sometimes with some of the terminology that they  
10 use, you don't understand the terminology. But for this  
11 particular -- I mean, this particular task, I mean, it's pretty  
12 straightforward. I think there's maybe like four steps that are  
13 actually in the manual. So it's not -- it's not actually that  
14 hard to understand.

15 But, I think one of the things too is you get used to  
16 the way that American manufacturers do their manuals, like with  
17 the way Cessna does it or the way Gulfstream does it or some of  
18 the other ones.

19 Q. Sure.

20 A. And with Eurocopter sometimes it's just a little hard to  
21 know where to look for things. And it's actually just through  
22 experience that you learn what the right thing.

23 Q. Sure. Good. John, this is going to be -- this is union  
24 performance, so maybe a little bit of fuel, but I have to do my  
25 checkmarks.



1                   When you're not working, like you were off a couple of  
2 days earlier, when do you like to go to bed and when do you like  
3 to get up?

4           A.   Probably 9:00 or 10:00.

5           Q.   And when do you get up?

6           A.   When I go to work or when I'm not working?

7           Q.   Not working.

8           A.   No work, I'm probably up at 7:00, 7:30, 8:00. Just it  
9 all depends. It depends on whether I played hockey the night  
10 before.

11          Q.   How do you sleep?

12          A.   Oh, very soundly.

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1 Q. All right. You're off duty Sunday and Monday. What do  
2 you do?

3 A. Let's see. I'm in school. I'm finishing my aviation  
4 maintenance management degree with Embry-Riddle with a minor in  
5 safety, so I've taken Accident Investigation. I understand what  
6 -- everything that's going on here. I've taken Human Factors.  
7 I've taken all these other classes and I had a class that actually  
8 ended on Tuesday.

9 And so, the week was spent, Saturday and Sunday, with  
10 making sure that I had my final -- all my assignments were in that  
11 needed to be turned in.

12 Q. Do you know when you went to sleep Sunday?

13 A. Sunday night? It was probably around the same time. I  
14 mean, I was normal. I don't -- I mean, I don't remember staying  
15 up late. It wasn't -- in fact, let's see. There's probably a  
16 hockey game on because I have NHL Sunrise and so I was probably  
17 watching hockey and probably went to bed after that. So --

18 Q. What about Monday, when did you wake up?

19 A. Monday, I believe I was up I think it was like 7:30,  
20 8:00.

21 Q. What did you do Monday?

22 A. I think it was more school. I don't really remember.

23 Q. When did you get to bed?

24 A. Monday?

25 Q. Yeah.

1           A.    I played a hockey game Monday.  It started at 7:30.  Was  
2 probably home by 9:30, quarter to 10:00.  Took a shower and went  
3 to bed.

4           Q.    When did you get up on Tuesday?  You were at work.  
5 (Indiscernible.)  That's -- okay.

6           A.    Tuesday I went back to work.  So, Tuesday I'm usually up  
7 -- I live fairly close here, so I was probably up by, hitting the  
8 snooze, maybe 4:45.

9           Q.    Okay.  Then, you worked Tuesday till 2.  It was busy,  
10 right?

11          A.    The morning was busy.

12          Q.    Okay.

13          A.    It was just one of those days where -- where I would say  
14 that the workload wasn't over, but it seemed like whenever I  
15 finished one job, the next job was right there waiting for me.  
16 And so it wasn't -- it wasn't anything that was too overly --  
17 overly difficult to deal with.  I know that the other two guys  
18 that were with me were in the Canyon and so I was kind of here by  
19 myself.  But it was like you know, "take the dual controls out of  
20 this aircraft;" "put the dual controls in this aircraft."  And it  
21 just seemed like it was one thing after another up until about  
22 11:00 when -- and that's when I think I went to lunch was at 11.  
23 And then right after lunch, it seemed like it really dropped off.  
24          Q.    What did you do after you left work?  Did you have your  
25 final, did you say?

1           A.    Umm, no.  This particular class didn't have a final.  It  
2 was a term paper.

3           Q.    Oh.

4           A.    That had to be turned in.  But --

5           Q.    Did you get it done?

6           A.    Oh, yeah.  Everything got turned in.

7           Q.    Great.

8           A.    Everything was good.

9           Q.    When did you get to bed?

10          A.    Let's see, it's Tuesday.  It was probably the same time.

11 It was like 9 -- 10:00.  That's like my routine.  You know, if I

12 stay up any time past that, I get tired, so it's --

13          Q.    And what time were you up Wednesday morning?

14          A.    Wednesday morning was probably the same time; was 4:45.

15 I think my alarm goes -- my alarm is set for 4:30 and then I

16 usually kind of lay there contemplating getting up and then

17 finally get up.

18          Q.    (Indiscernible).  Okay.  How would you characterize the  
19 pay here?  How's pay?

20          A.    One of the things when --

21          Q.    Go ahead (indiscernible) please.

22          A.    -- pay for me isn't all that, you know -- isn't all that  
23 important.  It's one of those things that makes things easier, but  
24 I have always told everybody this, I love what I do.  I've loved  
25 aviation since I got into it.  And so, pay has always been kind of

1 secondary to my job.

2 Q. How's morale?

3 A. I'd say morale's good.

4 Q. How's the equipment?

5 A. I think the equipment's good. I think it's well  
6 maintained.

7 Q. How's training?

8 A. Well, we got training scheduled coming up. I think the  
9 training is given when it needs to be given. The more you have  
10 the resources to get what you need.

11 Q. When you have questions, who do you go to?

12 A. I go to the people who I figure have the answers who  
13 have been here the longest. Some -- I mean, there's been some  
14 guys that worked here when I did last time that are still here.  
15 And so, you know, they have -- definitely have the experience.

16 Q. Is Lloyd one of them?

17 A. Yes, he is.

18 Q. How often do you see FAA here?

19 A. Honestly, I think the last time, besides today, would  
20 have been probably over the summer sometime. I think I saw Jim  
21 Brownell here in the hangar. And -- but, I honestly couldn't tell  
22 you exactly what day it was or even what month it was. I used to  
23 know Jim because Jim and I worked together at one of my last jobs.

24 Q. Oh.

25 A. So --

1 Q. What was special about this company?

2 A. I got laid off two times in the past 9 years working in  
3 the business jet industry, because of 9-11 and then because of the  
4 down turn. And I wanted to go work a job where I didn't have to  
5 worry about those things. And one of the things that I looked at  
6 when considering coming back here was I've known Kyle for an  
7 extremely long time. We actually -- our paths actually crossed way  
8 back in '91, '92, when I worked with Lockheed back at BRAC (ph.).

9 And just knowing the amount of time that some of the  
10 people have been here and how long the company has been here and  
11 how, you know -- how they -- since being right next door, I've  
12 seen them grow. And, you know -- that appealed to me.

13 Q. How are the schedules?

14 A. I think the schedules are good. They're fair. I mean,  
15 I think that, you know, there -- there isn't -- there isn't any  
16 kind of heat from management to work overtime. I mean, if you  
17 need time off, you take the time off that you need. You're not  
18 expected to work overtime, but they appreciate it and they let you  
19 know it when you do work overtime.

20 Q. You said it changed to a 4-on/3-off. It used to be 7  
21 on, but I don't understand that.

22 A. The night crews before used to work 7 days on/7 days  
23 off.

24 Q. Oh, 7 days, I see.

25 A. And then that was changed at the beginning of the year

1 to a 4 days on/3 days off; 3 days on/4 days off.

2 Q. How does it work? Does it work out okay?

3 A. Oh, I think so, yeah.

4 Q. How are working conditions?

5 A. I think they're good. I've worked in some real holes  
6 before. And, you know, here they seem to give you everything that  
7 you need. I mean, you know that the atmosphere on the floor from  
8 -- I mean, if you go -- I don't know if you've been down to the  
9 hangar down there and see it, but if you look -- just look at the  
10 hangar you can tell, I think, that, you know, it's a company that  
11 cares about -- about their people just by the place that they've  
12 actually put us.

13 Q. How about the space?

14 A. Oh, plenty of space.

15 Q. How's the heating?

16 A. The heater's great.

17 Q. Tools?

18 A. Plenty of tools.

19 Q. Lighting, how's the lighting?

20 A. Oh, lighting's good.

21 Q. Ventilation?

22 A. That's good too.

23 Q. Instruction course?

24 A. You mean the manuals?

25 Q. Yeah. Yeah. How are the manuals? How are the

1 instructions?

2 A. You know, they're okay. They're actually better. I was  
3 really happy when -- when we were given the electronic manuals  
4 because to me -- it seemed to me that they were -- they were a lot  
5 easier to understand the way that everything was linked together.  
6 You know, when -- because that was kind of what I was used to in  
7 my prior jobs.

8 Where -- as an example, let's say you had to put a  
9 particular grease on something and in the electronic manual, the  
10 grease -- the grease has a hyperlink where you can click on it and  
11 it will take you right -- show you what the greasing is, whereas,  
12 obviously in the old manuals, you always had to go dig it up and  
13 look through the other manuals to dig it up. So, I think that  
14 when they went to the electronic manuals, they were definitely --  
15 I really liked them. It was something that I thought was great.

16 Q. Have you been involved in any accidents prior to this?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. What happened?

19 A. Well, I actually worked here for Sundance when they had  
20 their last accident in the canyon, in the same canyon.

21 Q. Yeah. Didn't have a maintenance (indiscernible)?

22 A. No, I don't think so. I think the (indiscernible) final  
23 was the pilot. Before that, when I worked for Lockheed, I QC'd a  
24 Black Hawk phase that ended up crashing 30 hours out of the base.  
25 And that turned out to be pilot error also. Pilot flew the



1 aircraft outside the envelope that it (indiscernible) that he was  
2 at and the aircraft descended into the trees.

3 Q. Have you received any discipline?

4 A. No.

5 Q. A commendation?

6 A. From?

7 Q. Anyone. Any employers. Any --

8 A. Well, yeah, from -- from somebody like Gulfstream. I  
9 have awards given to me by Gulfstream when I was both on the floor  
10 and as a service center coordinator when I worked there.

11 Q. How would you characterize the Eurocopter products?  
12 (Knock on the door and off the record conversation.)

13 BY MR. BRENNER:

14 Q. How are the Eurocopter products? Sorry.

15 A. Oh, I think they're good products. I mean, they have --  
16 you know, they have a million aircraft out there. It just seems  
17 like everywhere you look there's Eurocopter products.

18 MR. BRENNER: Okay. Thank you, John.

19 MS. DUNKS: Do you have any other questions? Okay.  
20 Gary.

21 MR. CAMPBELL: I just have a couple of questions.

22 BY MR. CAMPBELL:

23 Q. Where did you go for the Turbomeca training? Where did  
24 you get that?

25 A. It was in house here.

1 Q. It was in house?

2 A. Yes. We had it down at Signature. I believe down there  
3 -- down there by their terminal (indiscernible).

4 Q. Okay. And just to clarify something. Initially, when  
5 you were asked if you were inspector qualified, you said no. And  
6 then -- that you weren't. And then later you said you and Lloyd  
7 were both inspectors.

8 A. Floor inspectors.

9 Q. Floor inspectors.

10 A. Yes. Not -- not IAs.

11 Q. Yeah, I understand that.

12 A. Maybe I misunderstood the question when I was asked it.

13 Q. And do you have a company stamp?

14 A. I do.

15 Q. What's your number?

16 A. One.

17 Q. One. Okay. And then the last question I have is what  
18 color was the hydraulic belt you tightened? Do you recall?

19 A. Black.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. It wasn't green. It was black.

22 MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you. That's all I have.

23 MR. BUTTNER: Just one.

24 BY MR. BUTTNER:

25 Q. Do you have a favorite aircraft?

1 A. I do.

2 Q. Which one? Helicopter-wise.

3 A. Helicopter-wise. Ah -- well, I always believe that your  
4 sort of first love, you know, is the one you never forget, so a  
5 Black Hawk is my first love.

6 Q. How about (indiscernible) billing range, anything else?

7 A. It would have to be Eurocopter because that's the only  
8 other one I've worked on, except for a 206.

9 Q. Do you have a favorite helicopter here? Like, in the  
10 fleet, do you like, oh, I like 3-2 Charlie or 2-9 Alpha? Or, you  
11 know, one that you like more.

12 A. I would say, no. There were some that have been here  
13 since when I was here last that I kind of like, you know, like I  
14 remember when that aircraft only had 4 hours on it, you know.  
15 That kind of deal.

16 Q. Yeah.

17 A. But as a favorite aircraft, I would say, no.

18 Q. And last question. The day before, were you involved in  
19 any of the maintenance on this aircraft that day? On --

20 A. I was off.

21 Q. Tuesday. Okay.

22 A. I was off. The stuff that was going on down there on  
23 the line didn't allow me to get down there to help with anything  
24 that was going on down there.

25 MS. DUNKS: Kyle, did you have any follow-up questions?

1 MR. REYNOLDS: No.

2 MS. DUNKS: Okay. Is there anything else that we didn't  
3 touch on that you'd like to talk about?

4 MR. PAULSON: No.

5 MS. DUNKS: Okay. Well, thank you so much for answering  
6 all of our questions and providing this information. I think it's  
7 very useful (indiscernible) for us to hear all this.

8 So, if you have any questions, you have my card and my  
9 number so just let me know. Or if you think of something that you  
10 wanted to share that, you know, just you didn't think about until  
11 2 days later, just feel free to give me a call or email --

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

13 MS DUNKS: And go from there.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thanks, John.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

16 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

17

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:           SUNDANCE HELICOPTER ACCIDENT  
                                  NEAR LAS VEGAS, NEVADA  
                                  Interview of John Paulson

DOCKET NUMBER:           DCA-12-MA-020

PLACE:                      Las Vegas, NV

DATE:                        December 10, 2011

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to  
the recording.

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Liz Summers-Fisher  
Transcriber