

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety, Western Pacific Region
Gardena, CA

OPERATIONS GROUP

WPR10FA371

Attachment 2

Witness Statements and Summaries

RECORD OF <input type="checkbox"/> VISIT <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 1:00 PM	DATE 07/29/2010
NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION Mrs. Susan Berg [REDACTED]		ROUTING	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
SUBJECT WPR10FA371, mk: American Eurocopter, mdl; AS350B3, N509AM, 7.28.2010, Tucson, AZ			
DIGEST The following is a summary of conversation with Mrs Susan Berg, who observed the helicopter accident from her place of work located at 3100 N. First Ave Near 1st Ave and Fort Lowell. She stated that she had no aviation experience but her sister and son were in the aviation field. Mrs. Berg stated that she was outside of her office when she noticed the helicopter fly overhead. She said that it seemed low. She continued to watch and noticed that the aircraft appeared to be "teetering" and looked like it might be in trouble. Then the helicopter started to "bank" sideways and at one point she could see the bottom of the helicopter. It then nosed over and went down. She saw the smoke rise into the air.			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED			
DATE 07/29/2010	TITLE Aviation Safety Inspector	SIGNATURE [REDACTED]	

RECORD OF <input type="checkbox"/> VISIT <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 8:00 AM	DATE 07/30/2010
NAME(S) OF PERSON(S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION Mr. Octavio De Menca- [REDACTED]		ROUTING	
		SYMBOL	INITIALS
SUBJECT WPR10FA371, mk: American Eurocopter, mdl; AS350B3, N509AM, 7.28.2010, Tucson, AZ			
DIGEST The following is a summary of conversation with Mr Octavio DeMenca , who observed the helicopter passing overhead at 1st Ave and River Road. He stated that he had aviation experience, he was a crew chief in the Air Force. Mr. DeMenca stated that he saw the helicopter pass over were he was in a parking lot and noted that it seemed to be approx 500 to 700 feet AGL. He noticed the Blue and White paint scheme and first thought it might be a Tucson Police Department helicopter but then saw that it was an EMS helicopter. He took particular notice to the helicopter because he said that it had seemed to slow down to a hover for a moment then proceeded slowly in a south easterly direction. It wasn't until he saw on the news that a helicopter had crashed and he realized that it was the same helicopter he had seen.			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED			
DATE 07/30/2010	TITLE Aviation Safety Inspector	SIGNATURE [REDACTED] Frank J. Loscalzo	

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Interview: Ricardo Carroasco
Phone:
Date: 8.5.2010
Time: 1030
Location: Telephone Conversation

Narrative:

The following is a summary of conversation with Mr Ricardo Carrasco, who witnessed the helicopter accident.

Mr Carrasco was outside his residence on Euclid Street. He noticed the helicopter flying normally from the Mt Lemmon area, and it flew directly overhead. He likes watching aircraft so he looks in the sky when he hears one close by. After the helicopter passed overhead he heard the engine 'stall' or stop, as if the pilot turned the engine off. The inertia of the helicopter kept it flying forward and in slight descent for what he counted as 6 seconds. About 2-3 seconds after he heard the engine stop, the rotor stopped turning. He then heard the engine start back up for 2-3 seconds, and the rotor started turning again, but then the engine stopped; "The chopper started working again, then stopped again." At this point the helicopter turned back towards the direction it came from, and disappeared behind a house. He ran to the accident site, recalled the strong smell of fuel, and that the flames were very large. The fire was very hot and he looked for the pilot but could not find him, and had trouble getting close to the fire because of the extreme heat.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Interview: Vera Kelley
Phone:
Date: 9.7.2010
Time: 1700
Location: Telephone Conversation

Narrative:

The following is a summary of conversation with Mrs Vera Kelley, the wife of the pilot.

Mrs Kelley stated that her husband did not stay at home during his normal work days, but would drive to Douglas Tuesday mornings to start his work week and stay in a company furnished apartment for the week. She was not aware of his sleeping or eating habits while he was away from home, but he never complained about the quality of his rest while staying at the apartment.

On Sunday, July 25, Mrs Kelley thinks that he woke and got up at his normal time, around 0600. They probably had the grand children for the day, then had dinner with their daughter. He probably went to bed at his normal time, between 2030 and 2100.

Monday, July 26, was an off day for her husband. Since she works during the day she was not aware of his activities during the day. She believes he got up at his normal time, around 0600. She got home around 1630 and then they had dinner with friends. They had no alcohol that night, and went to bed around 2100.

She thinks that he left their house Tuesday, July 27, in the morning around 0530 to drive to Douglas. She then talked to him for 10-15 minutes at 1830 that night. The conversation was normal, and he did not relay anything unusual about how he was feeling physically. That was her last conversation with him.

Mrs Kelley said that her husband ate regular meals every day. Breakfast on the week days was usually cereal, and on the weekend eggs and bacon. Lunch was usually a sandwich, or eating out. Dinner was usually balanced, meat, vegetables, pasta or bread. He would normally cook dinner and have it ready for them when she got home from work. There was no change in his eating habits prior to the accident.

She knows the symptoms of sleep apnea and said the her husband didn't have sleep apnea. He did snore at times while sleeping but never stopped breathing. On average, he slept better and more sound than she did.

He never relayed any concerns about the company or his supervisors/managers to her. He never complained or was concerned about the maintenance performed on the

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Aerospace Engineer (Field)
Western Pacific Region

helicopters. However, he did mention that he was concerned about the helicopter that he was to pick up at Marana because it had been trucked in for the maintenance that had been performed. She could not relay any more details than that about his concerns.

Mrs Kelley said that she didn't believe he had any financial concerns. He was retired from the Border Patrol and both of them have a good retirement plan. He did not moonlight or felt the need for extra money.

He did not take any medication regularly. He did take medication for erectile dysfunction occasionally. He did not take Tylenol because he had only one kidney. He did not drink much, and when he did they would share a rum and coke.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Interview: Tucson Fire & Paramedics
Phone:
Date: 8.1.2010
Time: 1245
Location: Telephone Conversation

Narrative:

The following is a summary of conversation with various Tucson Fire and Paramedic first responders about the condition of the helicopter crew when they arrived on-scene.

Tucson Fire Paramedics

Lilly Pesqueira
Adam Bower

They treated and transported the crew member that was conscious (Parker). He could state his name and age. He was badly burned on his hands, arms, face, and his right leg was broken at the hip. Burns over 60% of his body. Parker said he was having difficulty breathing and that they needed to intubate him. They could not intubate him because he was still breathing on his own. He was concerned about his breathing and kept informing the paramedics that they need to intubate him. They put high flow O2 on him. He did not say anything about what happen before or during the accident sequence.

Transport to the University Medical Center was 5-6 minutes.

Tucson Fire Medic 3

Gary Young
Larry Delfs

Medic 3 transported the pilot. The Engine company had pulled the pilot out of the wreckage. They put him on a gurney. It was apparent to them that the pilot was in cardiac arrest and unresponsive.

Tucson Fire Engine 5

Capt Mike Garcia

When he arrived on-scene he identified 1 dead. A second crew was identified in the middle of the wreckage. He was responsive, could mumble, and make communicative

gestures with his hands. They had to cut his harness to remove him from the wreckage. Capt Garcia said could hear unintelligible screams coming from the corner of the wreckage (pilot). When they were able to removed the pilot from the wreckage he could see burn areas and marks where the seat harness had been on the pilot.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Interview: Jason J. Orlandos
Phone: 5-
Date: 7.29.2010
Time: 1330
Location: Telephone Conversation

Narrative:

The following is a summary of conversation with Mr Jason Orlandos, who observed the helicopter accident from his residence. He stated that he had no aviation experience.

Mr Olandos stated that the helicopter appeared to be flying low, it looked low, and he could make out the medical emblem on the side of the helicopter. It appeared to be flying from the Ft Lowell area. As he watched it, it flew over head in a straight line, then made a sudden left hand 180 degree turn. As the helicopter turned it made a number of 'whump whump' sounds that seemed unusual to him. When the helicopter was turning, it appeared to be a steep turn, steep angle of bank, and he could make out the entire rotor. After the 'whump whump' sounds the helicopter sounded unusually quiet, not making its normal sounds. Just before he lost sight of the helicopter behind some trees, he noted that the nose was pointed down at a steep angle.

He ran to the scene of the accident and arrived just as the fire and police arrived.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Interview: Dale Gray
Phone:
Date: 7.29.2010
Time: 1405
Location: Telephone Conversation

Narrative:

The following is a summary of conversation with Mr Dale Gray, who witnessed the helicopter accident. Mr Gray said that he had no experience in the aviation field.

From his work parking lot (20634 N 1st Ave) he observed the helicopter traveling in a southerly direction, paralleling Park St but off set to the west. He said that he recognized the helicopter as a medical helicopter, and that the medical helicopters, in general, seem to fly lower than other helicopters. The helicopter was heading towards him, going low, fast, and loud, nothing unusual. He then heard a series of 'pops' emanate from the helicopter, and the helicopter entered a coordinated left hand descending turn. The helicopter made almost two 360 degree tightening turns, that he described as a funnel shaped flight path. He remembered the helicopter nose pointing about 45-degees nose down just before it disappeared behind a row of trees. Moments later he saw the smoke plume. He took a photo of the helicopter just above the tree line.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Interview: Steve Giffney
Phone:
Date: 8.5.2010
Time: 1100
Location: Telephone Conversation

Narrative:

The following is a summary of conversation with Mr Steve Giffney, who witnessed the helicopter accident.

He noticed the helicopter flying low while he was sitting in his truck at the stop sign on the corner of Glenn and Mountain. The helicopter was flying very low, erratically, tail swinging back and forth. The helicopter was facing east and the tail was moving between north and south. He then he watched it descend vertically down. He could hear that there was something mechanically wrong with the engine, as if the engine was being given gas but not catching, there was noise but not a smooth normal motor sound, it was trying to run but wasn't getting gas or enough gas. He watched the helicopter descend, the nose was pointed down, but as it got closer to the ground the tail came down so it hit the ground almost level, somehow. He did not see any smoke coming from the helicopter. During the event Mr Giffney said the rotor was not stopped but moving slowly, too slow to keep the helicopter flying, and the rotor did speed up for a second then start to slow down again. He drove his truck through the intersection of Park and Glenn, and pulled up across the street from the helicopter, the flames were very hot and he could not approach the crash. He believes he was one of the first, if not the first person on scene.

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Interview: Larry Duncan
Phone:
Date: 8.19.2010
Time: 1340
Location: Telephone Conversation

Narrative:

The following is a summary of conversation with Mr Larry Duncan, who witnessed the helicopter accident. Mr Duncan said that he as been around airplanes/aircraft for 30-35 years, has a general understanding of how they work, and is a student pilot.

Mr Duncan said that he was at a picnic bench in the vicinity of 1st and Ft Lowell St. He noticed the helicopter flying lower than normal, traveling in a southeast direction, between 500 and 700 feet above ground level (agl). From the sound and speed of the helicopter he estimated that it was in cruise. The helicopter flew past him, and was about 2-3 blocks away when he observed the tail boom deviate to the right about 10-12 degrees, and came back to center, then it deviated to the left 10-12 degrees and recentered again. The helicopter then immediately pitched up into a climb. The pitch up was steep, and he could see the entire top of the fuselage. The helicopter climbed about 300-400 feet, and just before it reached its peak it rotated to the right 90 degrees, then at the peak of the climb it rotated another 90 degrees so that it was now facing the direction it came from. At that point it fell vertically 'like a rock' for about 3.5 seconds, and he lost visual contact with the helicopter when it was about 300 feet agl, and had descended behind buildings and trees.

Mr Duncan said the he did not observe anything coming off the helicopter, and that there was no smoke or vapor coming from the helicopter while it was in the air.

RECORD OF <input type="checkbox"/> VISIT <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 9:36 AM	DATE 08/11/2010
NAME (S) OF PERSON (S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION Mr. David Dennis		ROUTING	
[REDACTED] . Tucson AZ		SYMBOL	INITIALS
[REDACTED]			
SUBJECT WPR10FA371, mk: American Eurocopter, mdl; AS350B3, N509AM, 7.28.2010,			
Tucson, AZ			
DIGEST The following is a summary of conversation with Mr David Dennis, who observed the helicopter accident from his residence. He stated that he has aviation experience flying hot air balloons.			
Mr. Dennis stated he was outside of his residence painting the eves of his house when he noticed the helicopter fly overhead. He stated is was the third helicopter of the day to fly by. He noticed this one in particular because it was low (approx 800 - 1000 ft AGL) and moving fast toward UMC Hospital and he thought that it may of had a patient on board going to the hospital. He stated it was tilted forward and thought it was moving as fast as it could go. He lost site of it for a moment as it went behind a large mesquite tree in his yard, it then reappeared and at that time he stated the engine just quit. He did not hear any noises other than the rotors but noted that they were moving very slow. He stated it lost all of its forward momentum. His first thought was that it ran out of gas or lost ignition. He then stated it just dropped down. He then heard it crash and saw smoke rise up into the air.			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED			
DATE 08/11/2010	TITLE Aviation Safety Inspector	SIGNATURE [REDACTED] Frank J. Loscalzo	