

**Factual Report – Attachment 3**  
**Police Interview Transcript**

**OPERATIONAL FACTORS**

ERA18MA099

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

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LIBERTY HELICOPTERS ACCIDENT \*

EAST RIVER, NEW YORK \* Accident No.: ERA18MA099

MARCH 11, 2018 \*

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Interview of: RICHARD VANCE  
Pilot

19th Precinct  
New York City Police Department  
New York, New York

Monday,  
March 12, 2018

## APPEARANCES:

DET. DARREN BRUCE  
30th Precinct Detective Squad  
New York City Police Department

I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Interview of Richard Vance:

By Det. Bruce

4

I N T E R V I E W

(12:29 a.m.)

## INTERVIEW OF RICHARD VANCE

BY DET. BRUCE:

Q. All right. Like I said before, I'm Detective Bruce. We're at the 19th Precinct. Just say your name and date of birth.

A. Richard Vance, 8/13/1984.

Q. Okay. And you're a pilot for who?

A. Liberty Helicopters.

Q. Okay. All right. So tell me in your own words, tell me what happened tonight.

A. So it was a 30-minute photo flight, departing out of Kearny helipad in Kearny, New Jersey. Departed just about 7:00. Went -- left, left Kearny and went to the Statue of Liberty, went to the Brooklyn Bridge. Over now the East River towards Central Park, and over Central Park was the first indication of a problem.

So the symptoms that I received in the cockpit were of an engine failure. I turned towards Central Park first, decided against that because of too many people. Then turned towards the East River and around -- you know, once I got over the river, I fully committed to the engine failure procedure, and when I looked down -- or when I reached down to pull the fuel shutoff cock is when I noticed that the passenger's tether, that they're tethered to the aircraft in for the photo flights, had gotten caught on that and pulled, pulled that back inadvertently. So that's,

1 that's what caused the engine failure.

2 Q. Okay. What was the nature of the flight?

3 A. It was a -- just a 30-minute photo flight. You know, people  
4 take pictures, kind of touristy, to see the city.

5 Q. Okay. And shutting off that fuel cutoff was like a standard  
6 operating procedure that you do in the event that the aircraft was  
7 going to crash?

8 A. Yes. Yeah, so that's -- if you're going to have an impact  
9 you do that, and it cuts the fuel off from the lines to reduce the  
10 risk of a post-crash fire.

11 Q. Okay. All right.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. And you've been flying for them for how long?

14 A. I've been flying for Liberty Helicopters April of 2016, for  
15 this company.

16 Q. Okay. And you said that the flight was -- when we spoke  
17 earlier you said that the flight was operated by Liberty  
18 Helicopter but it was --

19 A. Kind of contracted by New York On Air or FlyNYON.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Yep.

22 Q. All right. All right. That's it. Anything else?

23 A. Uh-uh, that's it.

24 Q. Okay. All right. Once the -- we won't start over. Once the  
25 helicopter hit the water, you said that it rolled over?

1 A. It immediately rolled over.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. And you were able to get yourself out?

5 A. Because I'm only wearing a seatbelt.

6 Q. Okay. As opposed to the passengers?

7 A. That, that are tethered, yes.

8 Q. Okay. All right. That's all I have. All right?

9 A. (Nods.)

10 Q. All right. Very good.

11 Oh, you can come with me.

12 (Whereupon, at 12:32 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: LIBERTY HELICOPTERS ACCIDENT  
EAST RIVER, NEW YORK  
MARCH 11, 2018  
Interview of Richard Vance

ACCIDENT NO.: ERA18MA099

PLACE: New York, New York

DATE: March 12, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.

  
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Kay Maurer  
Transcriber