

Michael Huhn
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: February 5, 2011
Person Contacted: Mr. Lucio Rodriguez (Gravel Pit Worker)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR11GA115

Interviewers: Deputy Gardner

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by Mr. Rodriguez in a telephone interview on this date:

Witness arrived in Tucson Avra Valley at 5am day of the accident
He was setting up the water truck, saw the helicopter
Total duration helicopter was in sight was 20 - 30 seconds
It was snowing/raining just prior to sighting of helicopter
He first saw it when it was spinning; saw it spin clockwise 4-5 times, increasing speed, last time it struck rocks and then rolled/disappeared from view. Tail did not hit anything. First strike he saw was skids/bottom, then pitched nose up, went backwards, then disappeared from view. No smoke, just dust after rock strike

He was 700 - 800 feet from helicopter, at bottom of hill
Didn't hear b/c his & other vehicles running, and he was wearing earplugs
Witness told his boss; his boss ran around other side of hill and saw something "shiny" but couldn't ID as the helicopter- boss saw and notified a Border Patrol agent
Witness was never on the hilltop at/near accident site.

Specific Questions/topics

- A. How much familiarity with helicopters/aviation does he have? very little; never ridden on one
- B. Where exactly was he ?- At water tank, filling his truck
- C. What was he doing?
- D. What time was it? about 10 or 11 am
- E. What were the weather conditions-? snowing (not much) & sprinkling but stopped ~5 minutes before he saw helicopter. It was windy. He works b/t hills, so winds could be strong/tornado-like where he (the witness) was
- F. What attracted his attention to the helicopter in the first place? he looked up and then saw it; that was his habit to look at the mountain occasionally; he would see helicopters and sheep
- G. Describe accident sequence of events and timeline

- a. Speed/direction/altitude/location
 - b. His first indication of a problem
 - c. Post-accident
- H. How long was the helicopter in view
- I. What does he think caused the accident? windy, loss of control. He initially thought the spinning was related to the helicopter "drilling"