


RECORD OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VISIT <input type="checkbox"/> CONFERENCE OR <input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE CALL		TIME 2:00 PM	DATE 09/08/2017
NAME(S) OF PERSON(S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION Robert Hoban 9-11-17 (Helicopter DPE); Robert Drapala 9-12-17 (FAA		ROUTING	
Helicopter ASI); Martin Sheehan 9-13-17 (Retired military pilot and current		SYMBOL	INITIALS
airline pilot); Jeffrey Daniel 9-14-17 (current aerobatic pilot); Michael			
Johnson 9-26-17 (Chief Helicopter Pilot, Helicopter Flight Services);			
SUBJECT Qualified aviation witnesses to the aircraft accident of N204HF on 9-8-17			
at the Flying W Airport (N14) in Medford, NJ.			
DIGEST In person interviews, telephone calls and written statements via email received by the			
above people. Robert Hoban, Robert Drapala and Michael Johnson all spoke to the accident			
pilot over the Unicom frequency in order to offer advice and suggestions to the pilot who			
reported loss of throttle control on his collective with the engine being stuck at high			
RPM. All the accounts and interviews presented similar events. The accident pilot was			
giving a local ride when he called the Unicom with his problem. Airport Manager Mindy			
Redner alerted local emergency services who arrived and positioned by Runway 1 while the			
pilot orbited the airport at about 1000' AGL for approximately 20 minutes. Also included			
was one attempt at a shallow approach and running landing which was aborted. The accident			
pilot elected to perform a full touchdown autorotation after shutting off the engine. The			
initial part of the autorotative descent appeared normal but at about 500' AGL forward			
motion stopped and a rapid vertical descent at a high rate with low rotor RPM developed.			
CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED Several other non-aviation witnesses were briefly interviewed on site and all gave similar			
descriptions. One cell phone video of the accident was observed by the IIC which depicted			
what was described. A copy was requested for the FAA files, it is currently in possession			
of the NTSB.			
DATE 09/28/2017	TITLE Aviation Safety Inspector	SIGNATURE  STEPHAN A. KOZA	

In reference to my radio communications on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 with James Evan Robinson.

I was SIC on our corporate aircraft as we approached N14 and KVAY. Our route from KJRA to KESN takes us directly over these airports. Approximately 17 miles away I heard there was an aircraft declaring an emergency.

We were at 1400 ft msl as we approached N14. I heard Mindy on the radio telling aircraft not to take off. I then heard her mention the fire company was on their way. That is when I heard Evan's voice on the radio.

He was circling the airport awaiting the fire department. My conversation with him was for approximately 12 minutes. He said he had a throttle malfunction. It took a few minutes to ascertain that he had it all the closed and in the detent. Needless to say it was a throttle malfunction he described.

I spoke to him to check the throttle friction to make sure it was not on. He said it was completely off. I then asked if the dual control collective was locked in correctly. He said it wasn't installed. We spoke about a running landing to correct the situation. He had already attempted that and said he couldn't get below 85 knots.

I asked him to rotate the mixture control counter clockwise a turn or two. He said it didn't do anything. I asked how far it was out if any. He said it didn't do anything and felt more comfortable doing an autorotation.

I mentioned I would probably would do a running landing and use the mixture and turning off a single mag to decrease the fuel. To reduce the speed on the running landing. He again mentioned he felt more comfortable with an autorotation.

I asked if he was current doing touchdowns. His reply was 4 months but felt good. I then mentioned to do an easy flare and use a nice run on to diminish the speed. To use that I told him multiple times to use the center of the runway. Especially since the fire department was there but more so for the safety of having the entire runway at his disposal.

He said that he was going to do an autorotation and pull the mixture. I told him it comes really quick and you need to reduce the collective within 1 second. I said it would be better simultaneously if available but it comes quick.

The last communication I heard from him was he was on a 2 mile final. I again told him to go midfield.

I heard once we were in Delaware that they did not make it



9/8/21017 Flying W Accident 1300est

Witness Statement: by Inspector Robert Drapala ASI/OPS

On 9/8/2107 I was conducting a CFI Initial Airplane Practical Test at the Flying W Airport (N14) Free Flight Aviation Aero club classroom. I had just completed the oral portion of the practical and was getting ready to walk out to the aircraft when Barbara Higginbotham from Free Flight Aviation Aero Club told me that Mindy Redner the airport manager needed me at the front desk.

When I got up to the FBO front desk she was on the radio talking to Evan Robinson the pilot of N204HS. Mindy wanted me to talk to the pilot. She said he was having a mechanical issue with the aircraft.

There were 2 other pilots on the radio discussing the mechanical issue with Evan.

I was not briefed on exactly what was going on and not briefed that there was another person aboard the aircraft until after the crash. I continued to listen to figure out the exact problem.

Bob Hoban, one of our DPEs was discussing the options of an emergency landing with Evan. Bob Hoban was Enroute to Washington DC in his companies Helicopter communicating with Evan on 122.8. Options being discussed where an autorotation vs a running landing.

I broke in and asked what malfunction Evan was experiencing. Evan stated that he was unable to control the Engine RPMs with the throttle. He was moving it full travel against the stop and then past the detent and back up to full throttle. He stated that there was no response to engine rpm and that it remained at full throttle at high RPM.

Mike Johnson, an Instructor with the same company Helicopter Flight Services was also on the radio, but I couldn't understand what he was saying.

Bob Hoban discussed with Evan in doing a running landing and pulling mixture either prior to or at touch down. Evan stated he was going too fast and didn't feel he could slow the aircraft enough to do a safe run on landing. He said that when he lowered the collective the engine RPM was accelerating and when pulling up he would climb.

A combination of cyclic forward and increasing collective accelerated to a higher speed. He seemed little timid about performing a running landing. (this was all a continuing conversation between Evan, Bob and myself per the running landing)

I felt that maybe he should reconsider the running landing. I suggested to Evan when over the runway at a approx. height of his rotor system to place the aircraft in ground effect and slowly pull mixture and attempt a running landing. Evan stated he still felt uncomfortable doing this and was afraid of touching down at too high of an airspeed.

Suggestions on how to slow aircraft down were discussed. Evan was still under the impression he wouldn't be able to slow his airspeed down at touch down to make a safe landing. I felt the risks of a running engine vs a non-running engine was less of a risk in this particular situation but I didn't want to push the issue and left the decision up to the pilot.

Evan gave the impression that he didn't want to remove his hands off controls at a low altitude and high airspeed to pull the mixture. Had I known there was another person on board I feel I would have pushed the running landing a bit more and suggested that he have his passenger pull the mixture. Evan had mentioned during the conversations that he had little experience in full downs but was familiar with training students in power recovery's. He didn't sound confident about the touch down autos.

Bob Hoban also agreed that the running land was a good option. Bob Hoban also discussed trying to turn a mag off as a possible way of maybe to get the engine to run rough and maybe slow the RPMs down.

Pilot stated that he would feel more comfortable attempting an autorotation and pulling the mixture prior to auto. A discussion between all pilots on the possible best choice to cut fuel off to the engine. (mags, Fuel shut off, Mixture). Evan decided to use the mixture and attempt to perform an autorotation to runway 01. Winds were approx. 10 kts at time entry into auto. (What Evan was seeing on his airspeed indicator was approx. 10 kts slower per his ground speed).

I walked out of the FBO onto the ramp to observe Evan approaching from the south for runway 01. Once on the ramp they provided me with a handheld radio.

Bob Hoban and myself suggested for Evan to aim for mid field for touch down. There was another person on radio suggesting to aim for numbers but it was broken up. I again advised Evan to aim for midfield. Mindy asked if we should move the Rescue vehicles up to mid field which I said yes to. I also mentioned to keep the crowd back in case parts from aircraft were thrown around after contact with ground.

Evan made a slight right turn entering final to 01 at approx. 1000ft. Engine and rotor rpm sounded normal for 80 kts per Evan's update. Evan entered Autorotation prior to 01. Normal profile at entry with normal pitch sound of rotor and engine. The profile for autorotation continued past the flare point and continued down below the trees. Just prior to trees and disappearing behind trees line rate of closure and decent rate appeared to be approx. 700 to 1000 fpm downward. Flare and initial pitch was not observed.

Witness Martin Sheen who was at end of runway 01 at approx. 150 from impact of aircraft stated that at approx. 400 feet he observed blades coning and observed rotor blades turning at a slow rate to observe each individual blade. At this point it was possible that blades were no longer producing lift and could have been the reason I observed the high rate of decent passing the tree line.

When I first saw the aircraft after impact I was standing on the north side of the gully looking down. The aircraft was destroyed and medical crews had already started rescue operation. I left that area and started to the hangar where Helicopter Flight Service is based.

I spotted Mike Johnson kneeling on the ramp in shock. I comforted him and asked if I could secure pilots records. At that time Mike stated that the person who was going to perform that night was a passenger that Evan was giving a ride to. Until Mike told me there was a passenger on board I had thought it was only the pilot on board.

After securing pilots records and getting information needed I contacted my office and informed management of accident. After that I assumed duties as IIC until Inspector Steve Koza arrived on scene.

Robert Drapala  
ASI/OPS

9-12-17



My Name is Martin Sheehan, I was a witness to the helicopter accident at the Flying W airport (N14) on September 8<sup>th</sup> 2017 at approximately 1300 local time. My location at the time of the accident was on the south ramp, next to the small most easterly hangar. I was approximately 200 yards from the impact area. My view of the final approach corridor was unobstructed. I witnessed the mishap helicopter execute what appeared to be an auto rotation maneuver to RWY 1 at the Flying W. From approximately 500 feet till impact the helicopter had little forward velocity. During the final approach the craft maintained a constant heading, maintaining runway alignment throughout with little oscillation left or right. Vertically, from 500 feet till impact, the crafts rate of descent increased above what I have normally viewed on previous practice auto rotations at the field. I did notice that the rotor disc was deflected vertically (coning) between 10 to 20 degrees in the vertical from an estimated 200 feet. Additionally, the rotor rpm was decreased enough that I was able to distinguish individual blades, sporadically. The helicopter descended into the brush and slight depression in the ground formed by a stream. There was no post-crash fire. A firefighter and I ran to the crash site via direct from the ramp area across the approach corridor, down the embankment, into the stream and up the other side to the crash site. I was able to use the tail rotor boom to help pull myself up the embankment. I inadvertently, grabbed the exhaust stack while climbing up the wreckage and it was hot to the touch but did not burn my hand. I did not smell any aviation gas odor nor see any leaking fuel. The cockpit was laying on its right side, tail boom detached, laying closer to the runway pointed down into the ravine.

While climbing up on the wreckage, I called the names of the passenger and pilot but got no response. Upon reaching the cockpit area, I continued to call out to the occupants with no response. The pilot's torso was visible under the wreckage and the body of the passenger. The passenger was lying on his side with the cyclic resting on his mid-section. I cannot remember the location or position of the collective on passenger side. There was a small amount of blood that had emanated out of the passengers nose but was not flowing. One of the passengers shoe and foot (I believe left) were mostly detached, the tibia was completely exposed with no active bleeding. That leg and foot were wedged under one of the torque pedals. No visible pulse was evident on the passengers exposed neck, thighs or legs. EMS was on the scene within another minute or so. At first examination EMS reported no pulse on the passenger and her response about the pilot was not understandable to me but it was obvious that the pilot was crushed in the wreckage.

EMS and Crash, Fire Rescue. Two pumper trucks were on location at the south end of the ramp, one with hoses deployed the other ready to move forward if needed, prior to the mishap crafts final approach. There were multiple EMS and police vehicle on site prior the mishap.

Personal Data: I am a 58 year old Commercial Pilot. I have been active in aviation for 42 years. I hold an ATP, 14,864 transport time, 2500 Tactical Jet time in the USMC and over 2500 light civilian time. I am a retired Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel, was a military flight instructor, Weapons School Graduate and instructor, Air combat Tactics Instructor, Aircraft Carrier Landing Signal Officer, currently hold a surface level waiver for day and night formation aerobatics in Yak 52 series aircraft.

Respectfully Submitted

Martin Sheehan

[REDACTED]

Mt Laurel NJ 08054

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

## Koza, Stephan (FAA)

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**From:** SHARON DANIEL [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 14, 2017 10:52 PM  
**To:** Koza, Stephan (FAA)  
**Subject:** Jeff Daniel accident witness statement

My Name is Jeffrey R Daniel certificate # [REDACTED] ATP. I have been an airline pilot with American Airlines for 25 years and have been an active general aviation pilot and CFII for the past 35 years. I served as a T37 Instructor pilot in the USAF prior to employment with American Airlines. I have no helicopter training and little general knowledge concerning rotor wing aircraft. I was an eye witness to the Helicopter accident that occurred at N14 on Friday September 8, 2017 at approximately 13:00 local time.

I arrived at N14 at approximately 12:45 and as I drove through the security gate I received a cell phone call from Steven Hoffman (present at N14 at the time) that an airborne helicopter had an emergency in progress and to clear the ramp area and join him along with other individuals present at N14 at the time of the emergency, between 3 tour busses that were parked on the ramp area west of the large white tent. Steven explained that the busses would provide protection in the event of any parts shedding from the emergency aircraft. Steven advised me that the helicopter had a "stuck throttle" and that the fire department and EMS were notified and getting into position.

From my location I witnessed the emergency helicopter make several rectangular patterns over the airport for a period of approximately 12 minutes. The helicopter then approached from the south of the airport straight in for runway 1. The helicopter appeared to approach the runway at a level or near level vertical path that I would estimate to be at an altitude of 500 feet agl. The helicopter then seemed to suddenly stop all closure with the runway, hold current altitude for a few seconds, then drop vertically with little or no lateral travel. The helicopter appeared to maintain longitudinal axis alignment with the runway. The helicopter appeared to drop at a high vertical decent rate with little or no decrease to the decent rate prior to going out of view behind and below the vegetation located off the approach end of runway 1. From my location no impact sound or visible sign of impact was noted.



A narrative of the moments prior to the helicopter crash on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Flying W airport, Medford, NJ.

It all started when I noticed three individuals that I did not recognize milling around in the vicinity 204HF. I pointed these individuals out to Evan and we both walked over to see what they were up to...answer questions...etc. It is not unusual for people to be curious about helicopters and want to check them out. Introductions were made and conversation began. After a few minutes I walked back over to the hangar. Evan remained with the three men just chit-chatting about helicopters, his job as an instructor etc. Several minutes later Evan came back to the hangar to get the key to the helo. He informed me that some of the men wanted to go for a ride and asked me if I would be his loader. I walked back to the helo with him and found that the number of people now present was close to 8 or 9. They had actually come down to check out the batmobile that is currently being stored in a trailer beside the hangars. Evan did a preflight of the helicopter. He then secured the passenger before climbing in himself. It was at this time I was informed by Evan that his passenger was Troy Gentry. He proceeded to go through the start up procedure and lift off. Nothing was unusual or out of the ordinary.

The helicopter took off down the runway and began to climb. Everything appeared normal as the helo made its way past us in the downwind leg of the traffic pattern. A few minutes later Scott Abrams arrived in the Flying W fuel truck...he informed me that Evan needed to talk to me on the radio. He informed me that the throttle was not functioning properly and that when he rolled it off, the engine RPM did not respond. He stated that he was unable to lower collective without the rotor and engine RPMs climbing...and that continued lowering of the collective would cause the RPMs to exceed limitations. I called Doug and informed him of the situation. After a few minutes of discussion, troubleshooting and clarification on the matter it was determined that an emergency landing was going to be necessary. I told Evan to remain at altitude and circle the airport. I notified Mindy Redner and asked her to call emergency services. I remained in contact with Evan. His demeanor on the radio sounded calm. During this time Evan also was in communication with other pilots on the radio, Bob Hoban as well as Bob Drapala. An attempt was made to execute a run on landing. However Evan was unable to slow down enough to make the landing safely and stated that he felt more comfortable with an auto-rotation. Emergency service arrived and positioned themselves in front of the hangar. I informed Evan that everything was as ready as it could be on the ground and that he could go at anytime...whenever he was ready.

Evan lined up on the runway. I heard the engine cut out. He began the autorotative descent but it was not long before it became apparent it was not being executed correctly. I began to see individual blades instead of a translucent disk. His vertical speed increase while at the same time his horizontal speed became almost non-existent. The nose of the helo rolled forward. Instead of being able to see the bottom of the helo...the cowling, air intake, landing gear etc...all I could see was the cockpit glass and rotor head. There appeared to be no attempt to flare. The helo then disappeared below the level of the runway into the gulley south of the thresh hold and a thud was heard as it impacted.