



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Clinton O. Johnson
Chief, Alaska Region
Alaska Regional Office

Date: June 13, 2014
Person Contacted: Lester Hathcox, pilot
NTSB Accident Number: ANC14LA041, N356EV

Narrative:

I interviewed Mr. Hathcox, the pilot of N356EV. At the time of the interview, Mr. Hathcox was back in Florida where he lives, and the interview was done by phone.

Mr. Hathcox explained that he had been hired to ferry the Eurocopter AS 350 B3, N356EV, from Anchorage to Texas, and he noted that this would be his first time flying from Alaska to Texas. He noted that in addition to ferrying the helicopter to Texas, he would also be providing transition flight training to the helicopter's new owner, Micky Seeman. Mr. Seeman's brother, Ricky, would also be joining them on the trip.

Mr. Hathcox said that soon after arriving at Erickson Helicopters, he began planning the trip, and he began to pre-flight the helicopter. He also examined the helicopter's maintenance records to ensure airworthiness. He noted that there were a few inspections that would likely need to be accomplished while en route to Texas, which did not make Mr. Seeman happy. I asked Mr. Hathcox if there were any open discrepancies with the helicopters fuel system, FADEC system, or any recent maintenance of any of these systems, and his answer was "no, not to my knowledge."

Mr. Hathcox said they planned to be airborne much earlier, so they could make their first planned fuel stop in Gulkana. Once they were finally ready to go, all three boarded the helicopter, with Mr. Hathcox in the left front seat, and Mr. Seeman in the right front seat. Mr. Hathcox then started to go through the checklist that was in the helicopter's flight manual. He said that after two unsuccessful attempts to start the helicopter, he asked for assistance from an Erickson Helicopters mechanic. He said that the mechanic then contacted another Erickson Helicopters pilot on his cell phone to assist him in starting the helicopter. He said that while talking with the Erickson Helicopters pilot on

his cell phone about the correct starting procedure, Mr. Seeman exited the helicopter, and a mechanic boarded the helicopter and sat down in the right seat. Once the helicopter was successfully started, the mechanic disembarked, and the second pilot again boarded the helicopter, and sat down in the right seat.

Mr. Hathcox said that the helicopter was operating at flight-idle, the yellow "TWT.GRIP" light was illuminated on the annunciator panel, and he instructed Mr. Seeman to slowly advance the collective-mounted throttle twist grip to the open position until the light went out. He said that as the second pilot began to advance the throttle to the open position, the engine immediately went to a very high RPM and the helicopter began to shake violently, and it subsequently rotated about 240 degrees to the left. He said he did an emergency engine shutdown, and then all the occupants exited the helicopter.

At the end of the interview, I asked Mr. Hathcox about his experience in FADEC equipped helicopters, specifically the Eurocopter AS 350 B3. He said he had about 8,000 total flight hours, with about 6,000 flight hours in AS 350 B2 helicopters and about 2,000 flight hours in AS 350 B3 helicopters. He added that most of his flight time was accrued during ENG and law enforcement. When I asked Mr. Hathcox how much time he had in Eurocopters AS 350 B3 helicopters equipped with Turbomeca Arriel 2B engines, which is outfitted with a single channel FADEC system, he said, in part: "I don't recall." When I asked him if he was aware of the starting procedure differences between the Turbomeca Arriel 2B vs. Arriel 2B1 engines, he said, in part: "I do now." When I asked Mr. Hathcox if he had ever received training in the starting procedures with a Eurocopter AS 350 B3 helicopter, equipped with a Turbomeca Arriel 2B engine, he said, in part: "No."

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