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Date: 10/17/2022

Subject: ERA23LA011, Information Provided by Left, Rear Seat Passenger
John Meyer II

Note: Dates and times are based on iPhone picture/video timestamps and phone call timestamps. The following excerpts were copied from a text provided by Mr. Meyer:

5:31 PM ET - Finished with our Work Tasks

I was on Useppa Island just finishing up with installing a StarLink satellite internet device to provide communications for Useppa Fire Department. I had a picture taken with Chief McGilloway in front of the Useppa Fire Station 221.

5:32 PM ET - Discussing the Helicopter Ride back to the Mainland

Tim Wells and I were needing to get transported back to the mainland of Fort Myers somehow so that we could return to our Lee County work van and head back to the Lee County EDC to end our workday. I was checking the StarLink speed test while I heard Tim Wells, Chief McGilloway, and Steven Mezynieski discussing the idea of transporting us back by helicopter to the area of Point Sanibel Marina. I overheard someone talking on the phone of arranging an approved landing zone of Iona-McGregor Fire Station 75. The group started to walk over to the helicopter, so I ran over to join them. As we were walking, Tim Wells asked Chief McGilloway, "Oh! You're coming too?" Chief McGilloway replied something to the effect of, "Yeah. Got nothing better to do. Might as well take a joy ride instead of sitting around at the station."

5:39 PM ET - Loading up into the Helicopter

As we were loading up on the helicopter, I took a selfie with my iPhone of me in front of the helicopter with Tim Wells sitting in the Rear-Right seat, Steven Mezynieski approaching the helicopter with a water bottle in his hand, and Chief McGilloway opening the Front-Left door to let start entering the helicopter. We all sat down, buckled up, and awaited our departure from Useppa Island.

5:41 PM ET - Started the Helicopter Engine

I took a picture of Tim Wells all buckled up and it appeared that he had tightened up his seatbelt. At this time, the Pilot Steven Mezynieski started up the engine.

5:59 PM ET - Crossing over Pine Ridge to approach Iona-McGregor Fire Station 75

The helicopter was lined up facing the Iona-McGregor Fire Station 75 landing zone. The helicopter started to approach the landing zone area. Everything sounded and felt normal at this point.

6:00:32 PM ET - Helicopter Malfunction and Spinning

As the helicopter started to lower, we started to spin clockwise out of control as I briefly heard the engine noise pitch up for a split second and then heard the noise pitch down as if the engine was struggling and about to stall. At around 100ft I knew the guy lost control and we were going to die. I yelled into the headset, "We are going to crash!" Then I felt a few loud back and forth jolting movements of the cabin shaking while we continued to spin in the air. I started to brace myself for the crash by making sure my elbows and knees were bent as I grabbed the front seat to brace for impact.

6:00:42 PM ET - Crash Landing 1 of 3 and Crash Landing 2 of 3

When we hit the ground, it jolted us and the door flew off, causing me to be ejected from the cabin and caused my feet to drag on the ground as we spun with the helicopter tilted on its left side. As I was hanging out of the left door, all I could see was my feet and the ground. I was suspended in the air by a very loosened seatbelt that dragged me around like a ragdoll. thought I was going to lose my legs and get sucked underneath. I remember telling myself, "I'm going to lose my legs! I'm going to lose my legs!" while I felt the helicopter spinning and I saw the ground get further

away and then closer again to where my feet hit the ground and dragged before seeing the ground get further away again.

6:00:46 PM ET - Crash Landing 3 of 3

The helicopter made its last crash landing in a ditch. My head was outside under the roof rail between the ground and the helicopter roof rail. I immediately looked up at Tim and saw that his head was gushing out blood like a water hose. I said, "He's dead. Tim is dead." I then thought to myself, "I need to save myself before the top rotor blades hit the ground and shift the cabin more towards the ground crushing me." I could hear the engine still running. That's when I instantly wanted to save myself by crawling out underneath from the bottom, which was out the left and up towards the rotors, although I didn't realize I was crawling towards the rotor at the time, I just unbuckled the seatbelt and crawled out.

6:02 PM ET - Exiting the Helicopter

When I got out, I got up and ran away towards the fire station never looking back. I heard someone say the helicopter was on fire. I immediately took my work cell phone out of my pocket and called Brooke to tell her I was just in a helicopter crash. She was freaking out and asked me where I was. I told her station 75. She didn't know what that was, so I said, Iona. Iona McGregor fire station 75 on pine ridge near the DMV. She said she's on her way and I said I love you. When I got off the phone with her, I immediately called Paul Filla, but it went to voicemail. A small back little SUV was driving around the back of the station as I ran to it waving my arms. A guy came out and walked towards me while I yelled, "Call 9-1-1!"