

On Jan. 21, 2016, PMI Ed Lee and I, Scott Mayural, conducted an interview with Mr. Jim Hicks via telephone; Jim Hicks was one of the six passengers on N11VQ, he was seated in the aft row, second seat from the left window. Mr. Hicks said: "as the aircraft cleared over a high ridge to the beach, the pilot commented that he had a hard time talking. The pilot was coughing and choking and also mentioned something about a fuel smell". Mr. Hicks said that his best guess is that the aircraft was at approximately 1500ft altitude when the pilot began coughing and choking, Mr. Hicks said that he felt the aircraft start to shake and that the aircraft began drifting towards the mountain during this time. Mr. Hicks said, that the pilot "did something" to correct the aircraft from pulling to the left (into the mountain) and pulled the aircraft to the right (towards the beach). Mr. Hicks said that he could smell a distinct fuel odor from where he was seated. Mr. Hicks said, as the aircraft was "sputtering or malfunctioning", the pilot said that he was going to set it down, Mr. Hicks said that is when the aircraft turned and started dropping; Mr. Hicks said that he remembered the aircraft turning and the tail spinning as the aircraft made a decent towards the beach, then at approximately 300 or 400 feet altitude above the ground, the aircraft seem to level off and then tripled its velocity and dropped to the ground. On the ground Mr. Hicks said he could smell an extremely strong smell of fuel. Mr. Hicks added that in thinking back, he did seem to see the pilot "slumped over the controls coughing and choking" but did not have a clear view of the pilot as he was seated behind the pilot.

On 1/20/2016 PMI Edwin Lee and I, Scott Mayural, went to Queen's Hospital to interview Blue Hawaiian Passengers injured in Hard Landing event on the island of Kauai on Sunday 1/17/2016.

First interviewed was Dan Amato: Mr. Amato said that he was seated in the aft left seat of the aircraft. Mr. Amato stated that the flight out from Lihue airport seemed normal and uneventful, approximately 35-45 minutes into the flight he said that the pilot began "coughing extremely". Mr. Amato also mentioned that the overall feeling of the passengers (when the pilot was coughing) is that they were very concerned due to the extreme degree of coughing and the length of time that the pilot was coughing, Mr. Amato says "I felt unnerving as it seemed like the pilot was possibly going to pass out." Mr. Amato said that when the pilot looked up from coughing he immediately said "My engines", Mr. Amato said he felt the "engine wind down" then said that he thinks the pilot had induced some type of input to the controls of the aircraft to correct the situation, in which Mr. Amato felt the aircraft "engine momentarily start to pick up again", he said "but then the engine winded down and the aircraft began losing altitude very quickly". Mr. Amato added that he smelled a strong fuel odor smell approximately 5 minutes before the aircraft lost altitude and eventually landed on the beach. According to medical staff Mr. Amato sustained a burst fracture of the L1 vertebrae with 40% loss of height, retropulsion of the L1 vertebrae, a laminar fracture of the L1 vertebrae and a liver laceration.

Second passenger to be interviewed was Eileen Hicks: Ms. Hicks stated that she thought it was strange that the ground crew was spraying "Febreeze air fresher" in the cabin of the aircraft just as they began boarding the aircraft at Lihue airport. She stated that the aircraft had just been refueled before boarding. Ms. Hicks stated that right before the aircraft "crashing", the pilot began coughing or choking for a long time", she said that "the pilot almost lost consciousness". Ms. Hicks stated that during the time that the pilot was coughing he said "I can't talk now" and was holding his forehead. Ms. Hicks affirmed that the pilot did have his right hand on his forehead and not on the controls of the aircraft. Ms. Hicks said that when the pilot seem to recover from coughing, he looked up and said "my engine!" Ms. Hick said that to her best recollection, the pilot's coughing episode was approximately a minute in duration. Ms. Hicks stated that she did notice an unusual fuel odor before the event. Ms. Hicks also noted that she felt the aircraft swaying during the time that the pilot was coughing, and in her opinion felt that the pilot did not have control of the aircraft during his coughing episode; she stated that "everyone was on edge" at that time. Ms. Hicks stated that all passengers exited the aircraft except for her daughter, Lindsey Hicks, as Lindsey was incapacitated. Ms. Eileen Hicks stated that the pilot was telling everyone to get up and walk around; the pilot then used his cell phone to call "his boss at Blue Hawaiian Helicopter". Ms. Hicks stated that after an unknown amount of time (she guess's approximately 35 minutes) another blue Hawaiian helicopter landed and took the pilot and another passenger, Mr. Star, away. The following is a description of the seating arrangement aboard the aircraft, according to Ms. Eileen Hicks: Front Row L to R: Pilot, Lindsey Hicks, Mr. Starr; Back Row L to R: Jim Hicks, Dan Amato, Harrison Hicks, and Eileen Hicks.

I FAA ASI Richard Pida conducted a phone interview with Mr. Russell Starr on January 22 at 10:44 am. He was back at the Marriott when I called him for his statement.

Mr. Starr was seated at the front right number two position.

I asked Mr. Starr if he could explain what he witnessed that afternoon and this is what he said “At 2:38 pm flying over the mountains clear skies he noticed the pilot choking and the helicopter lost power and the pilot restarted the helicopter and then made an emergency landing on the beach”. I then asked Mr. Starr if he could smell fuel and he said “very little slightly noticeable fuel smell.” Mr. Starr has traveled to Hawaii 15 times in the last 25 years and has taken helicopter tour rides in Hawaii five times since, and he considers himself a frequent flyer. He said “the fuel smell was nothing he hasn’t noticed before in his last five helicopter tours. To him it was normal.

Mr. Starr was taken to Wilcox Memorial Hospital in Lihue and was treated for spinal injuries.

Federal Aviation Administration

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RECORD OF  X  VISIT   CONFERENCE OR   TELEPHONE CALL

TIME: Approximately 01:00 p.m.

DATE:01/20/2016

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NAME(S) OF PERSON(S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION:

Mr. Dan Amato and Ms. Eileen Hicks, at Queens Hospital, Honolulu, Hawaii.

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SUBJECT:

Blue Hawaiian Helicopter Hard Landing on Kauai, Hawaii Aircraft tail #: N11VQ.

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DIGEST:

FAA RECORD OF CONVERSATION:

On 1/20/2016 PMI Edwin Lee and I, Scott Mayural, went to Queen's Hospital to interview Blue Hawaiian Passengers injured in Hard Landing event on the island of Kauai on Sunday 1/17/2016.

First interviewed was Dan Amato: Mr. Amato said that he was seated in the aft left seat of the aircraft. Mr. Amato stated that the flight out from Lihue airport seemed normal and uneventful, approximately 35-45 minutes into the flight he said that the pilot began "coughing extremely". Mr. Amato also mentioned that the overall feeling of the passengers (when the pilot was coughing) is that they were very concerned due to the extreme degree of coughing and the length of time that the pilot was coughing, Mr. Amato says " I felt unnerving as it seemed like the pilot was possibly going to pass out." Mr. Amato said that when the pilot looked up from coughing he immediately said "My engines", Mr. Amato said he felt the "engine wind down" then said that he thinks the pilot had induced some type of input to the controls of the aircraft to correct the situation, in which Mr. Amato felt the aircraft "engine momentarily start to pick up again", he said "but then the engine winded down and the aircraft began losing altitude very quickly". Mr. Amato added that he smelled a strong fuel odor smell approximately 5 minutes before the aircraft lost altitude and eventually landed on the beach. According to medical staff Mr. Amato sustained a burst fracture of the L1 vertebrae with 40% loss of height, retropulsion of the L1 vertebrae, a laminar fracture of the L1 vertebrae and a liver laceration.

Second passenger to be interviewed was Eileen Hicks: Ms. Hicks stated that she thought it was strange that the ground crew was spraying "Febreeze air fresher" in the cabin of the aircraft just as they began boarding the aircraft at Lihue airport. She stated that the aircraft had just been refueled before boarding. Ms. Hicks stated that right before the aircraft "crashing", the pilot began coughing or choking for a long time", she said that "the pilot almost lost consciousness". Ms. Hicks stated that during the time that the pilot was coughing he said "I can't talk now" and was holding his forehead. Ms. Hicks affirmed that the pilot did have his right hand on his forehead and not on the controls of the aircraft.

Ms. Hicks said that when the pilot had seemed to recover from coughing, he looked up and said "my engine!" Ms. Hick said that to her best recollection, the pilot's coughing episode was approximately a minute in duration. Ms. Hicks stated that she did notice an unusual fuel odor before the event. Ms. Hicks also noted that she felt the aircraft swaying during the time that the pilot was coughing, and in her opinion felt that the pilot did not have control of the aircraft during his coughing episode; she stated that "everyone was on edge" at that time. Ms. Hicks stated that all passengers exited the aircraft after landing except for her daughter, Lindsey Hicks, as Lindsey was incapacitated. Ms. Eileen Hicks stated that the pilot was telling everyone to get up and walk around; the pilot then used his cell phone to call "his boss at Blue Hawaiian Helicopter". Ms. Hicks stated that after an unknown amount of time (she guess's approximately 35 minutes) another Blue Hawaiian helicopter landed and took the pilot and another passenger, Mr. Starr, away. The following is a description of the seating arrangement aboard the aircraft, according to Ms. Eileen Hicks: Front Row L to R: Pilot, Lindsey Hicks, Mr. Starr; Back Row L to R: Dan Amato, Jim Hicks, Harrison Hicks, and Eileen Hicks.

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CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED

Documented Record of Conversation

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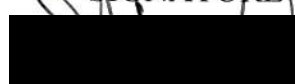
DATE

TITLE

SIGNATURE

01/25/2016

Aviation Safety Inspector



Federal Aviation Administration

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RECORD OF \_\_\_\_\_ VISIT \_\_\_\_\_ CONFERENCE OR  TELEPHONE CALL  
TIME: 10:44 am  
DATE: 22 Jan 2016

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NAME(s) OF PERSON(s) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION

Mr. Russell M. Starr

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SUBJECT:

N11VQ - Blue Hawaiian Helicopter Passenger Seated FWD RT #2 position involved in helicopter emergency landing on Kalalau Beach Park on the Island of Kauai

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DIGEST:

I FAA ASI Richard Pida conducted a phone interview with Mr. Russell Starr on January 22 at 10:44 am to 10:57 am. He was released from Wilcox Memorial Hospital and in his hotel room back at the Marriott when I called him for his statement.

Mr. Starr was seated at the front right number two position.

I asked Mr. Starr if he could explain what he witnessed that afternoon and this is what he said "At 2:38 pm flying over the mountains clear skies he noticed the pilot choking and the helicopter lost power and the pilot restarted the helicopter and then made an emergency landing on the beach". I then asked Mr. Starr if he could smell fuel and he said "very little slightly noticeable fuel smell." Mr. Starr has traveled to Hawaii 15 times in the last 25 years and has taken helicopter tour rides in Hawaii five times since, and he considers himself a frequent flyer. He said "the fuel smell was nothing he hasn't noticed before. To him it was normal.

Mr. Starr was taken to Wilcox Memorial Hospital in Lihue and was treated for spinal injuries.

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CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED

No further action taken at this time

25 Jan 2016

ASI



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DATE

TITLE

SIGNATURE

Federal Aviation Administration

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RECORD OF \_\_\_\_\_ VISIT \_\_\_\_\_ CONFERENCE OR  X  TELEPHONE CALL  
TIME: Approximately 10:00 a.m.  
DATE: 01/21/2016

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NAME(S) OF PERSON(S) CONTACTED OR IN CONFERENCE AND LOCATION  
Mr. Jim Hicks, Telephone call.

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SUBJECT:  
Blue Hawaiian Helicopter Hard Landing on Kauai, Hawaii. Aircraft Tail #: N11VQ.

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DIGEST:

FAA RECORD OF CONVERSATION:

On Jan. 21, 2016, PMI Ed Lee and I, Scott Mayural, conducted an interview with Mr. Jim Hicks via telephone; Jim Hicks was one of the six passengers on N11VQ, he was seated in the aft row, second seat from the left window. Mr. Hicks said: "as the aircraft cleared over a high ridge to the beach, the pilot commented that he had a hard time talking. The pilot was coughing and choking and also mentioned something about a fuel smell". Mr. Hicks said that his best guess is that the aircraft was at approximately 1500ft altitude when the pilot began coughing and choking, Mr. Hicks said that he felt the aircraft start to shake and that the aircraft began drifting towards the mountain during this time. Mr. Hicks said, that the pilot "did something" to correct the aircraft from pulling to the left (into the mountain) and pulled the aircraft to the right (towards the beach). Mr. Hicks said, that he could smell a distinct fuel odor from where he was seated. Mr. Hicks said, as the aircraft was "sputtering or malfunctioning", the pilot said that he was going to set it down, Mr. Hicks said that is when the aircraft turned and started dropping; Mr. Hicks said that he remembered the aircraft turning and the tail spinning as the aircraft made a decent towards the beach, then at approximately 300 or 400 feet altitude above the ground, the aircraft seem to level off and then tripled its velocity and dropped to the ground. On the ground Mr. Hicks said he could smell an extremely strong smell of fuel. Mr. Hicks added that in thinking back, he did seem to see the pilot "slumped over the controls coughing and choking" but did not have a clear view of the pilot as he was seated behind the pilot. More interviews to be conducted with other passengers when they are available, and will be documented here.



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CONCLUSION, ACTION TAKEN, OR REQUIRED:  
Documented Record of Conversation

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DATE

01/25/2015

TITLE

Aviation Safety Inspector

SIGNATURE

