

Mark Ward
Aviation Accident Investigator
AS-ANC

Date: July 16, 2024
Subject: ANC24FA063 Witness interview
Contact: Michael Gregg - Witness

Summary of a phone conversation with Michael Gregg.

He was hiking the Kalalua trail along the Na Pali Coast with a friend. They were used to helicopter noise as there was lots of helicopters flying over. The noise of a helicopter didn't draw their attention. They were standing at a point that looks out at the water and you can see the entire coastline before the trail turns into the valley. They stopped at this point to take some pictures. He remembers there was a "really big gust of wind." He had set his backpack down and the wind moved his backpack around. After the big gust of wind, they heard a very loud boom. They looked towards the noise and spotted a helicopter in free fall. All noise (helicopter noise) had stopped. The helicopter fell straight down in two parts. It looked like the tail section was detached. It went fast, 3 to 4 seconds. The impact made a loud, big splash. They watched for a while, never saw anyone come up to the surface. They met some other hikers later along the trail that described the noise they heard as whoop whoop boom.

Did not see any flames or fire.

Mark Ward
Aviation Accident Investigator
AS-ANC

Date: July 16, 2024
Subject: ANC24FA063 Witness interview
Contact: Miles Johansen - Witness

Summary of a phone conversation with Miles Johansen.

He was hiking the Kalalua trail along the Na Pali Coast with a friend. They had stopped at an outlook that looks out at the water and was a beautiful place to take pictures. They heard a loud bang. They spotted the helicopter falling in two sections, the main body and what looked like the tail. This all happened right after a "huge, huge gust of wind" He remembers the gust of wind was strong enough to blow Mike's 50-pound backpack off a rock. The helicopter fell straight down. The crash happened at exactly 105. They called it in at 120, first rescue showed up around 135. One tour helicopter flew past about 5 to 10 minutes after the event.

WITNESS STATEMENT

AIRCRAFT REG: N 144KL

NTSB: _____

WITNESS NAME: Erik Brondsen DATE OF BIRTH: 3/30/1945

STREET ADDRESS: _____

PHONE HOME: _____

I, the undersigned, make the following statements voluntarily, without duress or promise of reward:

I departed Hanalei Bay at 12:30 pm with 11 passengers working as a charter boat Capt. At approximately 1:20 pm I was inside the Pirates Cove, Napel Coast, Kauai. At 2:00 pm I received U.S.C.G. radio communication that a tour helicopter went down at Hanalei Falls. I observed constant 20-25 ENE Trade winds and gusts 40+ mph. I also observed water sports at Honolulu and off Hanalei valley approx 1/2 mile offshore. Water sports were approx 50 yds wide and 1,000' high. I marked on them with my location and initials.

I have read my statement as documented above (and if applicable, on continuation pages), And to the best of my knowledge and belief it is true and correct.

Signature: _____

Date: 7/19/24

Time: 10:30 am

Location: Kilauea, HI

City: Kilauea

State: HI

...to personnel and equipment. Radiation is not resumed by all pilots to continuously exist.

item 1

7/19/24
10:30am

56

ER

WARNING: High volume Tour Aircraft operating along Napali coastline. Monitor 127.05 for traffic information.

122.3

NORTH KAUAI RCO

HONOLULU

KILAUEA POINT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
WARNING: SHEAR WINDS

3101

Makaha Point radio towers

Puuhinahina radar dome

Nohili Point

BARKING SANDS PMRF (BKH) (PHBK)

CT-126.2 * ATIS 128.0

23 * L 60 122.8

Q. Mana

towers

drag strip

Kekaha stack

Waimea

277°

260°

27

26

25

24

23

22

21

20

19

SOUTH KAUAI
115.4 Ch 101, SOK

HONOLULU

Eleele

435 (225) stack

126.5

497 (357)

PORT ALLEN (PAK) (PHPA)

24 - 24 122.9

RP 9

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

18

15

12

9

6

3

0

33

30

27

24

21

Mark Ward
Aviation Accident Investigator
AS-ANC

Date: 10/15/2024
Subject: Pilot Interviews conducted by the FAA
Contact: Seth Cossel - FAA

Seth Cossel conducted interviews with the pilots that were flying in the area of where the accident occurred. Seth stated overall it does sound like a pretty windy day, near the limits of when the R44 pilots might start turning flights down. I might reach out to Mauna Loa, who fly mostly R44's, just to see what their thoughts were that day, even though I don't think they were flying near the time of the accident.

Seth provided the following pilot interview summaries

Max Shumway a pilot for Airborne, he flew over accident site appx 1245 HST. The back of the Na Pali felt fairly normal that day, guess the winds at 20-25 kts with a couple bumps. Did not think anything was abnormal that day. Does not recall hearing any radio calls from the accident helicopter.

Alexander Fairbanks a pilot for Sunshine he flew over accident site appx 1320 HST. Pretty windy, felt some gusts that shook the aircraft pretty good, estimates 20-30 kts, did feel some downdrafts and updrafts along the Na Pali, did feel a little low g light in the seat that day a couple times, has felt worse wind out there but this was pretty close to it. Tried to stay high and away from the cliffs to reduce the turbulence. Does not recall feeling any singular sudden gust of wind that was greater than the rest, just constantly bumpy and uncomfortable. Did not hear any calls from the accident helicopter.

Felipe Victoria a pilot for Aloha same company as accident pilot. He flew over accident site appx 1340 HST. Definitely windy that day, pretty constant wind estimate 25kts gusts to 30-35. Have felt worse but this was close to the borderline. Does not recall feeling any singular sudden gust, was more constantly gusty and uncomfortable. During a break between the morning flights he called Guy (accident pilot) to ask if he was going up for his afternoon flights (Guy was on lunch break), Guy said he was and this helped Felipe inform his decision to keep flying that day. It was Guys next flight after lunch that was the accident flight (schedule is 3 am flights - lunch break - 3 afternoon flights).

Felipe has flown in the accident helicopter in the prior couple weeks. Did not recall anything unusual, no issues during pre-flights or in-flight. Said there was a little hydraulic residue near the MR Gearbox but not too unusual and the reservoir never indicated a loss of hydraulic fluid. When asked about checking the tail cone attaching points, Felipe said he visually and physically checks them on his preflight and never noticed any problems on the accident helicopter.