



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Mitchell Gallo
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: March 8, 2015
Person Contacted: Ashley Danuser
Participants:

Federal Aviation Administration: Randal Ottinger, Del Deathridge
Airbus Helicopters: Seth Butner
Air Evac: Michael Koenes; Donald Lambert; Michael Benton
NTSB Accident Number: CEN15FA164

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation, Ashley Danuser stated their approach to St Louis University Hospital helipad (MO55) prior to the accident approach was from the west, which seemed to be the same approach that Mr. Ronald Rector was taking. During the approach, the helicopter tail was “more to the left” and Mr. Rector said that he was going to move the “nose left and tail right” when he was going to land. Ms. Danuser said they had gusts of up to 25 knots. She said that knowing the area and MO55, she knew that it was going to be a “hard landing” on a “good day. She said there was “a lot of rolling” and “a lot of yawing” during the approach to MO55. Over the helipad, Mr. Rector was having a “hard time” and “a couple of more seconds” she would had told him to abort the landing and to do another “recon.” After landing, Mr. Rector said that he wanted to remain on the helipad. She said that it was not a “typical thing to do” to have the helicopter remain on the helipad because other helicopters would come in. At 2258 she sent a text message to Mr. Rector stating that they were ready to be picked up from MO55, and he responded in text that he was on his way. She said that at 2309, she looked at the time and thought it was “taking a while for his return.” Mr. Rector did not tell her why he wanted to remain on the helipad but her “gut reaction was that it was a hard landing and he didn’t want to do that again.” She said it was “difficult” to get the helicopter skids onto the helipad. She said that she began employment at Air Methods in January 2015 and that this was her second shift mission with Mr. Rector. She had two years of experience with an aviation company. She said that when it came to Mr. Rector, she had no issues, very nice, competent, and very set in his ways. She said they briefed “every night” and would cover abort procedures. Mr. Rector’s briefs were “very detailed” and the “same” every time. Mr. Rector had been employed by Air Methods

for over a year. She said that Mr. Rector “might have caused some people anxiety” because he would pace back and forth from the weather computer to the door while waiting to depart on a flight. They were en route to an initial call and he was frustrated with the coordinates he received. The flight pattern that he would fly was “S-like” because he was trying to avoid talking to air traffic control so she was frustrated because they had a patient aboard, and he was taking a longer route to avoid air traffic control. On one flight, he landed with to the right of power lines and the tail rotor pointed at the ambulance and then shut down. She said that her and Kevin Borgmann were going to talk to him about these issues during debrief. She said that Mr. Rector took longer to do things. He did not “have a flow,” he “seemed nervous” by his “demeanor and approach.” She said that she did not see Mr. Rector use a checklist when he flew. During one flight, Mr. Rector pulled out a binder and gave it to Mr. Borgmann to look up and Mr. Borgmann told Mr. Rector that it was on the back of the binder. She said that Mr. Rector could not find things on his paperwork that he should have been familiar with.

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