

FROM: Bruce A. Milton

17 October 2018

TO: Geary Monckton

FAA Albuquerque FSDO

SUBJ: Witness Statement, N9326G Accident

1. On 16 October 2018 I was the PIC of Air Care 1 (N911NM), an EMS helicopter based at San Juan Regional Medical Center in Farmington, NM. I and my crew of two medical personnel transported a patient from Farmington to Albuquerque, refueled at Cutter FBO and departed KABQ at 1615 for a VFR return flight to Farmington. During climbout KABQ tower instructed me to switch to ABQ Departure on 127.4. Shortly after checking in with Departure control I became aware of an aircraft (N3926G) with apparent partial power loss. The controller and pilot were discussing aircraft status, location, nearest airport, etc.; I'm sure the pertinent details will be pulled from the tapes, but the controller was obviously concerned about 26G's low altitude and power situation. I recall him reminding the pilot to ensure his carb heat was on. After several exchanges between Departure and 26G the controller asked me if we could help the situation. I replied in the affirmative, requested a vector towards the stricken aircraft, and was advised to fly a heading of 240 for 18 miles; I estimate my turn to that course was at 1620 hours. The controller continued to talk to 26G as we proceeded towards their location, the last response from the Cessna was probably 1623 or so. The controller issued me some course corrections as we neared the area of the last radar return and I spotted the wreckage about a mile out. We arrived overhead at 1629. I would estimate the ceiling to be 1800', and prevailing visibility about 8 miles in light rain. Conditions to the southwest were worsening, bands of snowshowers obscured the terrain beyond. There was no fire and I landed at 1630, about 30 yards upwind from the wreckage. OAT on the ground was 5 degrees Celsius. The medical crew proceeded to the wreckage to determine the occupant status and indicated there were no survivors. I relayed the location (lat/long) and occupant condition to Departure via an overhead Southwest Airlines aircraft; the terrain prohibited direct radio contact and made cellphone usage difficult. I shut down the helicopter and walked to the wreckage. As I neared the forward left portion of the fuselage I observed several pieces of mixed ice shed from the leading edge of the left wing. The pieces were rectangular in shape, roughly 12-18" in length and 4-5" in height, thickness 1/4"-3/8". During a cursory walk around the wreckage I did not notice ice on any other visible surfaces, but as the weather was rapidly deteriorating, it was not an in-depth analysis. There was no smell of Avgas, nor any visible fuel leaks. The ELT was visible through a rip in the aft fuselage but I could not see if it was armed (Throughout the course of this entire event I failed to check 121.5 to see if the ELT had in fact been actuated...). As the weather was worsening, we returned to our aircraft with the intent to depart. Before engine start I

noticed a TCAS target 800' almost directly overhead, at that same time I saw multiple emergency vehicles on a dirt road one half mile west of our location. The TCAS target turned out to be the News 7 helicopter. Using a strobe flashlight we were able to get the attention of an emergency vehicle and it navigated its way to us. We turned the scene over to the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Deputies and departed the LZ at 1705.