

## supplement report for helicopter crash 08-08-20

From [REDACTED]

Sent: Sat, Aug 8, 2020 at 11:14 pm

To: Ryan Skelton

On Saturday, August 8th, 2020, at approximately 15:00 hours I, Deputy Christopher Colona, employed by the Brewster County Sheriff's Office, was dispatched to the Big Bend Regional Medical Center (BBRMC) in reference to a case follow up. Earlier that day, at approximately 1215 hours, a Bell 206B3 JetRanger (Tail# N284S, Color Blue on White) helicopter reportedly crashed in Reagan Canyon located in Brewster County. The approximate grid coordinates of the crash site are 29.67396, -102.71353. The crash was discovered by Froylan Hernandez and Cade Woodward, employed by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD), at approximately 1215 hours.

Hernandez and Woodward were refueling at the Alpine Municipal Airport at approximately 1130 hours before they began searching for helicopter #N284S. Hernandez and Woodward were notified that helicopter #N284S did not report back after it was supposed to be refueling. Hernandez stated that when he arrived on scene at approximately 1215 hours the pilot and owner, later identified as George Ezell, had extracted himself from the crash site and walked a short distance away. Ezell was contracted out of Arizona by the TPWD to provide helicopter services for low level aerial surveys. Ezell was conscious and alert but complaining of pain around his abdomen.

Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) helicopter operators Jimmy Morris and David Riggs were notified of the crash and responded to conduct a search and rescue operation. Riggs transported Ezell from the crash site to the BBRMC.

When I arrived at the BBRMC at approximately 1520 hours, Ezell was being prepared for a First Flight transport to the University Medical Center of El Paso. Ezell was in critical condition with internal injuries and possible head/neck/spine trauma. I identified my name and agency to Ezell and asked if he remembered anything about the crash. Ezell said he did not remember anything after the crash, but did recall having a mechanical failure before crashing. Ezell said that he was en route to refuel helicopter #N284S when he felt a sudden vibration in the flight controls. I asked Ezell if he felt the vibrations in the rudder pedals and Ezell said that he did not. Ezell said that it felt like the vibrations were coming from the main rotors or the transmission. Ezell said that he had never felt such intense vibrations like that before. Ezell said that he did not believe there were any environmental conditions that affected the helicopter. Ezell said that he did not know what caused the vibrations but he said it felt like the main rotors were breaking apart from the helicopter. Ezell said that he decided to make an emergency landing to inspect the helicopter and began a left turn toward a flat open area that would be safe for landing. Ezell said that his altitude was about 800 feet



and that he was about 800 feet from the landing zone when he started the emergency landing. Ezell said that before he could reach the landing zone, the engine still had power but the helicopter lost lift and crashed. Ezell did not remember anything after the helicopter descended and crashed.

Morris stated that three passengers on board helicopter #N284S were deceased when he arrived on scene. Morris stated he believed the co-pilot, later identified as Brandon White, also extracted himself from the crash site and walked approximately 100 yards to the area where he was found deceased. Morris stated that the remains of the other two passengers, who have not been identified, were located at the crash site. Morris and Riggs transported White to the Alpine Municipal Airport and arrived at approximately 1815 hours. Judge Robert Steele, from Brewster County Precinct 1, pronounced White deceased at approximately 1828 hours. White was transported from the airport to the Alpine Funeral Home.