

McGlynn, 33870: I'm Detective John McGlynn, with the Broward County Sheriff's Office, CCN 33870. Today is August 28th, 2023. The time is 12:25 PM. Interview's taken for Case number 11-2308-009494. Which occurred today. The person being interviewed is Daron Roche, date of birth [REDACTED]. And the interview is being taken in North Broward Emergency Room. Uh, Daron, do you understand that I'm a police officer?

Daron Roche, 19079: Yes.

McGlynn, 33870: Do you know what perjury is?

Daron Roche, 19079: No.

McGlynn, 33870: Perjury is, if you lie under oath, it's a crime.

Daron Roche, 19079: Okay.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay. So, it is a sworn, recorded interview. So, I'm gonna have you raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so, help me God?

Daron Roche, 19079: Yes.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay. Let the record reflect that Daron, did raise his right hand. So, you could put it back down. Alright. So, Daron, what's your, who is your employer?

Daron Roche, 19079: Broward Sheriff's Office.

McGlynn, 33870: And what is your job function there?

Daron Roche, 19079: Helicopter Pilot.

McGlynn, 33870: How long have you been doing that?

Daron Roche, 19079: Since April 23rd, 2019.

McGlynn, 33870: 2019. Okay. And what time did you start work today?

Daron Roche, 19079: 7:30.

McGlynn, 33870: 7:30. And what did you guys do at 7:30? Like what, what's part of your morning routine?

Daron Roche, 19079: I rotate out with the night pilot. The night pilot informs me if he had a call, if he did anything with the aircraft, any maintenance issues, uh, just an overall picture of what his shift was for 12 hours.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay.

Daron Roche, 19079: That way I have a better idea, at the beginning of my shift. For example, the aircraft is gonna undergo maintenance, or if um, an aircraft, broke and we moved into another one. That's what we did, we switch out. So, then, I pre-flighted. I was in the process of pre-flighting the aircraft.

McGlynn, 33870: And what does that entail? I'm not familiar with a pre, is that like checking over it or?

Daron Roche, 19079: Yes.

McGlynn, 33870: Getting ready to fly.

Daron Roche, 19079: So, imagine before you get into your car, you're gonna make sure all your tire pressure is good. You're gonna make sure all the doors are closed.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay.

Daron Roche, 19079: And you're gonna make sure that the windshield is clean. You're gonna make sure that the engine has oil. That's what a pre-flight is on here.

McGlynn, 33870: And is that a team approach? So, everybody that works on that or is that strictly the pilot's job?

Daron Roche, 19079: The airframe itself is the pilot's job. The inside with the medical equipment, that's the medical crew member's job.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay. Alright. Just learning as well. So, um, so, you do your, your pre-checks. You already talked to the pilot from before. Did he have any flights that night?

Daron Roche, 19079: No.

McGlynn, 33870: No flights.

Daron Roche, 19079: No flights.

McGlynn, 33870: Did they fly at all?

Daron Roche, 19079: They didn't fly at all.

McGlynn, 33870: They didn't fly at all. Um, he never said, that anything was wrong.

Daron Roche, 19079: He never started the aircraft.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay. No, flights the night. Okay. And then what caused you today, to all get into the helicopter and take off? What did you have an assignment? A call?

Daron Roche, 19079: We had a call. It was a car crash I believe. At 441 and, It was on 441 somewhere. So, I knew we were flying westbound.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay. So, you were gonna go westbound. Who all was on board?

Daron Roche, 19079: Terryson Jackson and Mikael Chaguaceda and me.

McGlynn, 33870: In the aircraft. I, I've never seen it, but how many seats are in the front?

Daron Roche, 19079: Two.

McGlynn, 33870: Two. Are they both pilot seats?

Daron Roche, 19079: They can be, but we only have one set of controls. So, it's a single pilot operation.

McGlynn, 33870: Single pilot. And the single pilot is on the left or the right?

Daron Roche, 19079: The right.

McGlynn, 33870: The right. So, like the passenger side of a car. But you would be on the right?

Daron Roche, 19079: I'm on the right as the pilot.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay. Single. You're on the right. Who's to the left of you?

Daron Roche, 19079: Terryson Jackson.

McGlynn, 33870: Jackson. And then where is Mickael?

Daron Roche, 19079: Behind me, facing forward, in his seat, buckled up.

McGlynn, 33870: So, right rear, he's facing the front or the back.

Daron Roche, 19079: He's facing, me.

McGlynn, 33870: Facing you. The front of it?

Daron Roche, 19079: He's facing forward.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay.

Daron Roche, 19079: Yes.

McGlynn, 33870: Facing forward. Alright. Approximately what time do you think you took off? And it was from Pompano, right? Pompano Air?

Daron Roche, 19079: 8:10.

McGlynn, 33870: 8:10

Daron Roche, 19079: 8:05. Right around 8 o'clock.

McGlynn, 33870: Alright. So, around 8:00 AM, you take off for the car accident. Um, and what happens?

Daron Roche, 19079: I started the aircraft. I took off. Air traffic control said, "Do you want to proceed direct westbound?" And I said, "Yes, we'll take direct westbound." And he cleared me for takeoff. I took off. Everything was fine. At about maybe 300 to 400 feet, to the best of my knowledge, 300 to 400 feet. Uh, tower said, "Go ahead and switch to Executive." Cause I was switching airspace. So, I need to talk to Executive Tower, which is the next airport over. So, I switched the frequency over and as soon as I switched the frequency over, I was waiting to give Executive a call. They had some traffic on the radio so, I couldn't transmit just yet. There was a loud bang or some sort of explosion, towards the back of the aircraft. I knew it wasn't any of the crew members. I knew it had to have been something wrong with the engine. So, I immediately went down to the engine gauges, to see what was going on, with one of the engines to see where the problem was coming from. Trying to troubleshoot, the aircraft at this point is still flyable. There's nothing, there's nothing essentially wrong with it aerodynamically to continue flight. So, I, um, saw that the turbine outlet temperature was rising on engine one. So, I brought the engine to idle, to see if that could fix it.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: As soon as I did that, I reverted my attention to call Pompano, cause I was still in their airspace. I called Pompano Tower back. I said, Pompano Tower, BSO 9, I need to return to the airfield. We've lost an engine. I'm declaring an emergency." Which is practice, that's what you're supposed to do.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: You're supposed to declare an emergency so, that they can remove any air traffic or any airplanes off the runway, or out of the way. I requested to have the runway.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: I can't recall, what runway, or how he wanted me to approach. All I knew is that I was gonna land the aircraft on the runway to get my crew and the helicopter down safely. So, again I

cannot recall whether I had told Chaguaceda or Terryson, there's a fire. I don't know why it's doing this. So, right after I called Tower and they gave me the approval to come in with an emergency, I hit a firelight. Which,

McGlynn, 33870: A firelight?

Daron Roche, 19079: Yes, I'll explain what that is.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay.

Daron Roche, 19079: Sorry.

McGlynn, 33870: That's okay.

Daron Roche, 19079: The firelight on the aircraft, there's one for each engine. It's a fuel shut off valve. It will shut down the fuel to that engine, which will shut down the engine. It also releases Halon 1301, that will retard and destroy any fire. Uh, I hit that, I push the button, it said active, it's green. It's telling me, okay, it's working. I'm like, okay, so, whatever fire we have in that engine compartment is now being destroyed. Basically, I'm getting rid of the fire, but my TOT is still climbing. I'm still trying to figure out what is going on. I'm not sure what's going on. I look up, I set myself up for final, to land on the runway. I don't care how fast I'm going on the runway, I just wanna land it. It'll slide on just like a ski hits,

McGlynn, 33870: Yeah.

Daron Roche, 19079: It's perfectly fine. I just wanted to get as close to the ground. Meanwhile, my temperatures from my engine, on the back on the side one, is still hot. There's temperature lights that are in that engine compartment. There's also an air conditioning, uh, unit that was just installed two weeks ago by Metro Aviation. The aircraft's, this aircraft I was flying, it's the oldest aircraft in the entire fleet in BSO. It's 24 years old. It need, needed to retire a while ago. So, they retrofitted the brand-new air conditioner into the system, done by Metro Aviation. The aircraft got here last week. We started flying and everything seemed to be fine. As we were coming in for final, to land on the runway, uh, I hear another loud bang.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: And when I hear the loud bang, I essentially lose all ability to control the aircraft. So, up until this point, so, up until this point, the emergency procedure that I was handling, was just a normal day. We trained for this as pilots.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: I may have been off on a few things here and there, but you know what? I just wanted to get the [REDACTED] crew to the ground.

McGlynn, 33870: Yeah.

Daron Roche, 19079: And myself. At this point, before the aircraft started to spin and before the second boom happened, I already knew I had cooked an engine. I knew because my T O T temperature outlet, outlet temperature was so high. I was like that engine is [REDACTED] done.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: It's done, it's cooked, a million dollars out the door. But I was okay with it. I didn't care. We were on final. Everything looked okay. And then that second loud bang happened. The aircraft started to spin almost immediately. It pushed me and Terryson forward, towards the dash of the aircraft. And as we're trying, as we're spinning, I'm trying to catch the spin. And I don't, I know that doesn't make any sense, but I'm. It's like, maybe like a pit maneuver in a car.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: With a cop car going after somebody, who's running from them. Uh, if you pit somebody and they, they, they grab the wheel or whatever. I don't know. I'm, I'm spinning, I'm trying to find the right control to put in, to get the aircraft down to the ground. At this point, I think I've lost a pitch link, which is what controls the ability for me to control the aircraft. I think I've lost one. I'm not sure if I've lost one or not. The aircraft starts becoming even more uncontrollable, because as my rotor is spinning one direction, the aircraft wants to spin the other.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: Cause of torque, right. That's what the till rotor is there for. So, I keep spinning. We keep spinning, we keep spinning. My, I even try opposite pedal. My pedals are doing nothing. My pedals control the till rotor. My pedals aren't doing shit. I'm sorry to cuss, but this happened four hours ago.

McGlynn, 33870: No, it's.

Daron Roche, 19079: So, uh, I go to the collective and the cyclic, which the collective and the cyclic are connected to the main rotor, which is the only thing I think I have left. And at this point, I think I'm gonna die. I, I realized there's no point, other than that my mind is completely [REDACTED] blank. So, I lower the collective a little bit, to try and reduce the amount of spin. Because Terryson, and Chaguaceda, and I, are gonna black out from the G's that the spin is creating, If I don't get the aircraft close to the ground or get the spin under control. So, um, I essentially don't have control of the aircraft, I know that. And, uh, we landed, we landed on this top of a house. Um, we hit pretty hard. Um, do you want me to talk about the crew?

McGlynn, 33870: Well, after you crashed onto the roof, how did you get out?

Daron Roche, 19079: So, as soon as we crashed, there was smoke and there was fire. And I think even Terryson, when we were going in to land, I think he said, that there was smoke behind the aircraft. Um, but anyways, when we crashed, uh, we landed on the copilot side or the passenger side, on the left side of the aircraft. I, I noticed there was fires starting. Just what is the beginning of a fire. Like, there's smoke, I can see flames. I look, I can hear Chaguaceda, saying it on the radio. I think he said, "I'm getting out," or something like that. I, I don't recall exactly what he said, cause at this point the trauma's hit.

McGlynn, 33870: Yeah.

Daron Roche, 19079: I'm just trying to figure out what the heck's going on. And part of me is like, do I just sit here in the aircraft and wait? What do I do? And I was in a lot of pain. And I look over at Terryson, and he's limp, his muscles are limp, his neck is limp. He's wearing his helmet. He's still in his seatbelt. But I knew that the impact had knocked him out, at least unconscious. I don't know for a fact, whether he was unconscious or whether he passed right there. I have no idea. Uh, so I, I yelled his name, and I started using my hand to hit him on his shoulder. And I was, I was trying to think of ways on how I could possibly get him out, but I also had to worry about myself.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: So, uh, as I was getting out, I think the last time I touched him, I had taken my foot, and I had nudged his shoulder with my toe of my foot. And I said, "Terryson, we have to get out now. We have to get out now." Or something like that. Again, don't quote me on that, cause I don't really remember,

McGlynn, 33870: Yeah.

Daron Roche, 19079: what I said. Um, and I got out, I unbuckled myself obviously. And when I got outta the aircraft and I tried to wake him up one more time. The way we're angled, there's not really a, a lot of room for me to move around. There's not really a lot of room for me to just reach over and try and open up his door and unbuckle him, like, I can't do that. That's, that's too difficult.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: Uh, especially with the aircraft laying like this. So, uh, I got outta the aircraft and I don't remember, I don't remember how I got outta the aircraft. I really don't. That part of that, the last part, the last time I saw Terryson in the time of me getting out, I don't really remember. Because I know I got outta the aircraft. Because Chaguaceda, got outta the aircraft. Right. Like with together, like somehow, he, he may have gotten out first, and then I got out behind him. I don't know. He sat down. We were like, 15 feet from the helicopter, maybe 20 feet from the helicopter on the roof. Cause we had no way to get down. I wasn't gonna jump down. We didn't know what to do. We didn't even think about getting away from, off the roof at this point. We were just like, holy shit, what just happened? So, I sat down next to Chaguaceda, and I asked him, "if he was okay." And I said, "Did Terryson get out?" Cause everything's going different directions, right. I see people inside the house, you know, uh, from the hole that we made when we crashed. And I'm like, trying to think what, what the heck just happened? What is going on? And then within a split second, Pompano Fire Rescue was there. And they, they, I, I was trying to yell. I don't know if I yelled or not, or maybe I was thinking I was yelling, but I was trying to tell them there's one more person in the aircraft. There's one more person in the aircraft. And again, I don't remember if I got that message to them, cause it was loud. Um, and they put up a ladder. We got off of the, off of the roof, down the ladder. I threw my helmet down. I don't even know where my helmet is. Um, I threw my helmet down on the ground. And we're getting off of the roof. And as soon as we get off of the roof, the helicopter explodes, or something explodes.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: That causes a loud bang and stuff to go flying everywhere. Um, which at that point I, I'm in the hands of Pompano Fire Rescue, thinking I'm gonna code at any second. Thinking I'm gonna die at any second. I'm, I'm awake, I'm coherent right now, but something bad's gonna happen to where I crash. I just kept thinking that. And Chaguaceda was in, Chaguaceda, was in the ambulance with me. And I, I asked about Terryson, I think. And they had given me some answer. I don't remember what the answer was, but it put me at ease for a second, because I figured all right, maybe he did get out. Um, and then I'm, I'm here.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay. Um, anything you think I, I should know that I didn't ask you? Or anything that you feel is important?

Daron Roche, 19079: I, I that is, that is legitimately what happened.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay.

Daron Roche, 19079: Uh, the, there's nothing that I could have done to make that outcome any different. If it was any other pilot or any other crew, they would've still had the same outcome. Would they have survived or would all of them survived? Or would none of them have survived? I have no idea. Maybe I did something that just, so, maybe the house that we landed on is what saved all of us. Cause the aircraft was rotating upside down, is what was happening. I was, I was trying to fly the darn thing, cause that's the only option I have. And the aircraft when it lands on its side like that, it's a, it's top heavy.

McGlynn, 33870: Mm-hmm.

Daron Roche, 19079: It's got a main gear on top of us. Right. So, I'm assuming af, in an afterthought thinking about it, the aircraft was maybe trying to rotate. So, if that house wasn't there, we, we may have all been dead.

McGlynn, 33870: Yeah.

Daron Roche, 19079: But the way the aircraft landed, only one person was on that side of the aircraft, and they sustained most of the blunt trauma. Those seats that we are in, those aircraft seats. They're not designed to be crashed sideways. They're only designed to be crashed forwards. They, they go like that. They, they go underneath the dash. They roll. They're not designed to go that way,

McGlynn, 33870: That way.

Daron Roche, 19079: or that way. Um, like I said, if it was any other pilot, it would've happened to them most likely. If it was any other pilot, I don't know if the outcome would've changed. Other than turn the aircraft back around and follow the proper procedure of what I thought was an engine fire. And I brought, I declared an emergency. The aircraft gave me, or the airport gave me priority. For somebody who's going through a lot of adrenaline and somebody who's going through a huge drastic change in the flight. I did what I thought I was doing was right and that was trying to troubleshoot and eliminate the emergency and land on the ground. I was close enough to Pompano, to where I was going back to the airport, because I didn't want to endanger persons or property.

McGlynn, 33870: Yeah.

Daron Roche, 19079: I'm not sure if I would've been able to find a safe place to land in time, if I wasn't near the airport with that emergency happening.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay. Okay.

Daron Roche, 19079: That is essentially, from what I can recall, is what I remember. That's the whole story.

McGlynn, 33870: What are your major injuries, like today? Like did they tell you like, broken bones or, or internal?

Daron Roche, 19079: I'm gonna be sore for a couple days. There's nothing wrong with my back.

McGlynn, 33870: Okay.

Daron Roche, 19079: I mean,

McGlynn, 33870: Well, that's good.

Daron Roche, 19079: there is nothing on the x-ray, that says that there's anything wrong with my back. My neck seems to be fine. I'm going to be in pain tomorrow. I'm probably going to be in pain emotionally for the next, I don't know how long, because I lost a friend, I lost a family member. I lost somebody who I work with every 48 hours, and I spent all day or all night with them.

McGlynn, 33870: No, I,

Daron Roche, 19079: And I.

McGlynn, 33870: I can't even imagine.

Daron Roche, 19079: And I, I, they died on my watch. So, what like, what am I supposed to do.

McGlynn, 33870: I'm sure you have plenty of people that are gonna help you out, to talk to you. I mean,

Daron Roche, 19079: That's, it's not gonna fix anything.

McGlynn, 33870: I mean, counselors. Um, it's just like a police department, I mean, everybody's got your back. You know, they're all, they're all here to help you get through it. Alright. Um, everything you stated is the truth to your best of your knowledge.

Daron Roche, 19079: Yes.

McGlynn, 33870: And then nobody forced you or coerced you to make this statement? You were here voluntarily? Well, not in the hospital voluntarily but, you voluntarily provided your statement.

Daron Roche, 19079: Yes, cause that's the truth. I have nothing to hide. I didn't do anything wrong.

McGlynn, 33870: You're good. Um, that's gonna conclude our interview. It is 12:47 PM.