

Investigator Name: Leah D. Read
Title: Sr. ASI
Division: ERA

Date: July 30, 2025

Subject: ERA25MA171

Contact: Ismail Gorul, witness

Mr. Gorul sent an email to the NTSB on the evening of April 10, 2025, detailing what he witnessed in regard to the accident involving N216MH. On July 30, 2025, I spoke with him via telephone as a follow up to his statement.

Mr. Gorul stated that he lives on the 20th floor of an apartment building located at [REDACTED] in Jersey City, NJ. He said he is used to hearing helicopters fly by his building and what they normally sound like. Mr. Gorul said he was sitting at his desk working when he heard something "different" and not normal with a helicopter that was operating near his apartment building. He stepped about 2 yards to his east facing windows and saw the helicopter "fall like a brick" into the water just north of the Holland Tunnel ventilation towers. He believes the helicopter fell in two sections. Mr. Gorul said he saw hundreds of birds (he thinks they were seagulls and maybe geese) flying in the area but could not recall how high they were flying. However, he did not see any birds around the helicopter when it was descending to the water.

End

*A draft of this memo for record was sent via email to Mr. Gorul to review. He reviewed the memo and approved as written.

Investigator Name: Leah D. Read
Title: Sr. ASI
Division: ERA

Date: July 31, 2025

Subject: ERA25MA171

Contact: Irene Clarke, witness

Ms. Clarke submitted a detailed witness statement via email on the day of the accident, April 10, 2025. On July 31, 2025, I spoke with her via telephone as a follow up to her statement.

Ms. Clarke stated that she was running north along the pedestrian path that runs parallel to the Hudson River in Jersey City. It was a very cold day. She was already a few miles into her run and recalled that as she was running around the lighthouse on Newport (located just south of the Holland Tunnel ventilation towers), a flock of about 20 "very big, fat birds" (she believes they were geese due to their size and wingspan but was unable to identify them officially) took flight right in front of her and headed easterly toward the river. Ms. Clarke said there is a small green space and dog park near the lighthouse, and it's possible that a dog may have spooked the birds. She thought the birds were going to hit her as she was running.

Ms. Clarke stated that about 2 minutes later as she was approaching the Ellipse she heard a "bang" overhead, and she immediately looked up. She said that she is very used to seeing helicopters operate up and down the Hudson and the helicopter appeared to be at an altitude she is used to seeing them operate at. Ms. Clarke said she had a direct line of site on the helicopter and described it as being "right there" in front of her. She said she saw "sparks" coming from the tail section as it separated from the main body of the helicopter. Ms. Clarke said the sparks were not part of an explosion and appeared to be just from the tail separating. She said the main body of the helicopter then rolled inverted and descended into the water north of the Holland Tunnel ventilation towers. She also watched the tail section float down to the water.

Ms. Clarke said she did not notice any birds around the helicopter as it was breaking up.

Ms. Clarke said it was very cold, and it was hard to dial her phone. She was able to reach 911 but struggled to give them an address of her location.

Ms. Clarke then ran down to the sculpture east of the Ellipse to see where the helicopter parts had hit the water. She did not see any birds after the helicopter impacted the water but did make a comment to a group of bystanders that maybe a bird struck the helicopter since she had just seen a flock of big birds a few minutes earlier.

End

* Ms. Clarke was provided a draft of this memo via email to review. She reviewed the above statement and concurred that it was an accurate account of her observations.

Investigator Name: Leah D. Read
Title: Sr. ASI
Division: ERA

Date: September 8, 2025

Subject: ERA25MA171

Contact: Kaily Furlot, witness

In a telephone conversation, Ms. Furlot stated that on April 10, 2025, around 3pm EDT, she was walking her dog eastbound on the south side of Pier A in Hoboken, New Jersey, when she heard a loud noise then a low-grade "woo, woo" sound above her. When she looked up, she saw a helicopter coming apart in flight. The helicopter was not high in the sky, and just on the other side of the Hoboken transfer station. She estimated the helicopter was less than .3 miles from where she was standing. Ms. Furlot said it all happened very fast, but she saw the main rotor separate from the body of the helicopter (what she attributed the "woo, woo" sound too). The main body of the helicopter descended almost immediately straight down on the other side of the Hoboken transfer station; however, since she had not reached the end of the pier, the transfer station blocked her view. She did not hear an impact, so she assumed the helicopter impacted the Hudson River. The main rotor descended slower than the main body of the helicopter. Ms. Furlot then saw gray or black colored "bits" of organic debris floating down from the sky which she identified as birds and/or bird feathers. The debris was not metallic in appearance and did not seem to be part of the helicopter. Ms. Furlot said the weather was "dreary" and cool, and she did not recall seeing any birds prior to the accident. However, she was aware that seagulls and geese are active in that area around the river. After the accident, she turned around and called 911.

End

*A draft of this memo for record was sent via email to Ms. Furlot to review. She reviewed the memo and approved as written.