



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Andrew L. Swick
Aviation Accident Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: December 4, 2014
Person Contacted: Mark and Lisa Shelton (Owners)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR15FA051

Where: Homewood Suites, Salt Lake City, Utah

Attendance:

Andrew Swick – NTSB
Shaun Williams – NTSB
Thom Webster – Robinson
Mark Shelton – Aircraft Owner and Director of Wildlife Capture, Native Range Inc
Lisa Aircraft Owner

NOTES:

Mark and Lisa suggested to check for the engine log at Claus' house. They stated that the logbook was not contained in a Robinson Helicopters satchel, but only in a black three ring binder. The binder and logbook were with the helicopter when it was delivered to Claus on October 17, 2014.

Mark and Lisa have been working together for 9-10 years. Although they spend most of their time in New Zealand, Mark has made a couple of trips back since October, 2014. They first met Claus when they were working for different companies out of the same hanger. Claus was mainly responsible for the aircraft maintenance. He seemed to enjoy the field repair aspect. Bruce would help Claus.

The aircraft was purchased in December, 2013 with approximately 400 hours total time. As a condition of sale, bladders were to be installed in the fuel tanks prior to delivery. This delayed Mark's acceptance of the aircraft.

Shortly after purchase, the following items were replaced:

- Auxiliary fuel pump (Performed in South Dakota)
- Manual fuel pump (Performed by Light Helicopter Depot, Oxnard, CA)
- Fuel servo (Performed by Light Helicopter Depot, Oxnard, CA)
- Scissor link (Performed by Upper Limit Aviation, Inc., Salt Lake City, UT)

Majority of work is usually accomplished by Upper Limit

The aircraft finished a job in Nevada about a month ago. On the flight back, the aircraft “had a bit of a vertical.” There was noticeable slop in the blades and movement in the bolt. They discussed options for work on the blades. The owners stated that they were not aware of anywhere in town that could work on the blades. The repair work was never discussed with Upper Limit. It came down to three options:

1. Order new blades from Robinson and utilize the rebate to total 23,000.00 (Did not meet requirements)
2. Send the blades to Robinson for upgrade
3. Send blades to Pennsylvania for repair for 2,500.00

Mark asked Claus what he would do and he recommended sending the blades to PA. Mark spoke with Don Young (Avionics Technician) before Thanksgiving and he stated that the blades were back and needed tracking. Mark instructed Bruce to track the blades in a heavier configuration but had not spoken with him since Thanksgiving.

The day before the accident, 12/01/2014, Don told Mark that Claus and Bruce had been out tracking the blades.

At some point, Claus had been told from PA that the blades had been worked on before.

****After this comment, the logbooks were reviewed by Thom and it was discovered that on 9/12/07 at 87.3 hours TT, Robinson replaced the blades and hub but reused the spindles.****

Mark asked several times if the aircraft had pitched up before break up according to witness statements or video. When questioned why he had mentioned this, he said that maybe something had gone on in the cabin such as cords becoming tangled around the yoke. He thought if it caused a pitch up, maybe the pilot nosed over, resulting in the break up.

The aircraft was being brought to Claus for a 100 hour inspection, radio install and new seatbelts. The blade issue that resulted in them being sent out was discovered during this work.

When asked about the cylinder reaming, Mark stated that a valve stuck momentarily on start before a flight to SLC. He said that a wobble check was performed and everything looked fine. As a precaution, Mark hired Upper Limit to ream the cylinder since Claus did not have the correct tooling for the job. He told Upper Limit to check the valves and do what needed to be done. They were not told only to look at the one cylinder.

Interview lasted approximately 1:15.



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