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Owner of Helicopter Involved in Botany Bay Crash Says FAA, NTSB to Conduct Full Investigation

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Bell 206B rotorcraft that crashed Monday afternoon at Botany Bay, St. Thomas. By. CARIBBEAN BUZZ VIA FACEBOOK

Caribbean Buzz, the company which owned the helicopter that went down at Botany Bay on Monday afternoon, killing all four individuals aboard, including the pilot, said in a release Tuesday night that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) along with the National Transport Safety Board (NTSB) would conduct an investigation into the crash and release their findings upon completion.

Caribbean Buzz said the helicopter was a Bell 206B rotorcraft. In a report filed Tuesday, the FAA said the aircraft "crashed under unknown circumstances," and listed the helicopter as "destroyed."

The Bell aircraft was registered as N13AT, model 206, according to the [FAA's standard district office](#) in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

“We are devastated by this accident and the subsequent loss of life,” said Caribbean Buzz Helicopters Manager, Charlotte Van Heurck. “Extensive research will be needed to learn exactly what caused the accident. Right now, we are focused on supporting the families of those lost.”

“Out of respect for the privacy of the family of the passengers onboard during the accident that occurred yesterday, we cannot provide any further details at this time,” said Ms. Heurck.

Pilot Maria Rodriguez was among the deceased. Caribbean Buzz described Rodriguez as a lifelong St. Thomas resident with more than 25 years of flight experience who was extensively familiar with the aircraft, area, and flight-related conditions. She is survived by her husband and two children.

As [reported by the Consortium Monday](#), four people, including the pilot and a family of three, were on the helicopter when it went down Monday afternoon. The Consortium also reported that emergency responders resumed their search and rescue effort early Tuesday after visibility diminished Monday. The V.I. Dept. of Justice in a release issued late Tuesday said the search was indeed paused Monday and resumed Tuesday. The bodies of the victims have since been recovered, said V.I. Attorney General Denise George.

"Recovery required cutting thick brush, therefore, DOJ Medical Examiner technicians with the assistance of V.I. fire Services, St. Thomas Rescue, V.I. Port Authority, and VITEMA worked together to successfully remove the bodies," Ms. George said. "ME technicians then transported and secured the bodies in the morgue."

The family of three have been identified as Daniel Yannone, Neisha Zahn and their son Tyler Yannone, who was a senior at Antilles School in St. Thomas. The identities were released by the St. Thomas Reformed Church in a post on Facebook.

"Tyler belonged to our church, to our XYG youth group; he and his parents Daniel & Neisha belonged and served this church and community in countless, unselfish ways; friends to so many," wrote the St. Thomas Reformed Church pastor, who was only identified as Jeff. "On this eve of Ash Wednesday, where we remember our mortality, I ask you all to join our faith community in prayer for Daniel, Neisha, Tyler and Maria (beloved pilot who many called "friend.")"

The family, originally from Youngstown, Ohio, was the proprietor of Beep Business, a St. Thomas customs brokerage.

V.I. D.O.J. Medical Examiner, Dr. Francisco Landron, will be performing autopsies on all four victims of the crash, said Ms. George. “Our responsibility under the DOJ Medical Examiner’s office is the removal and securing of the bodies. This includes positive identification determination, and true cause and manner of death determination, investigations, autopsies, toxicology & specimen analyses,” she said.

In a release issued late Tuesday, Antilles School, where Tyler was a senior, said, "The Antilles School family suffered a tragic loss Monday when Tyler Yannone, a member of our Class of 2021, his parents Daniel Yannone and Neisha Zahn, and alumni parent Maria Rodriguez — whose daughter graduated in 2006 and whose son continued to be a part of our community until high school, when he left to pursue a career as an international kiteboarder — passed away in a helicopter crash on St. Thomas.

"Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers are with each family member and loved one affected by this devastating loss.

"Antilles was closed for students Tuesday, allowing our faculty and staff the chance to come together virtually, but also to meet with students and parents to remember Tyler, and to offer grief counseling for those in need.

"We will be providing additional resources for our families, staff, and alumni in the upcoming days but will not be publicly sharing those details. It is important for us to respect the privacy of our community."

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