

## **RETIRED STATE TROOPERS/PILOTS WHO JUST OPENED A BRAND NEW AIR RESCUE BUSINESS MODEL VOLUNTEER TO COME TO THE RESCUE OF A DISPARATE CONGRESSMAN LOOKING TO HAVE SOMEONE RESCUE AMERICANS**

On March 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM after dinner with his wife, Tony Marinello received a call from a frantic Congressman who needed to get a rescue team and aircraft into Haiti. Tony never heard of the Congressman before he was told his name. The Congressman told Tony that he had made several calls to other organizations and companies and that he could not get anyone to do it FOR HIM. After the Congressman pleaded with Tony for a few minutes, Tony had to calm the freshman congressman down and then proceeded slowly asking him to give him the information he needed so he could determine whether he could do the flight. The congressman gave him the name of the Orphanage and the name of the individual who was visiting it occasionally and that they had 8 volunteers that needed to be gotten out of Haiti. Tony asked the congressman the location of the place and Tony went into his flight calculations and mission planning mode. Tony being an experienced pilot and had knowledge of the Haiti area was the right man to call. It so happened that the Congressman kept calling around until he reached a willing hero to do the job.

Tony Marinello had just gotten his Florida and other professional licensing for medevac credentials, permits after a year plus of schools, obtaining certifications, Helicopter Medevac licensing, finalized his loan on the Sikorsky helicopter, painted his logo on the tail and set up his new business model on how he was going to operate his Tropic Air Rescue division of his Tropic Air Charter fixed wing company. It was all in place ready to do business just a week before the congressman's call. The congressman got very lucky finding a man who was already a hero and first responder, and after his retirement became the mayor of his city up in New Jersey.

Tony is a retired New Jersey State Trooper, who flew medEvac calls to pick up traffic casualties throughout New Jersey and take them to emergency room hospitals. He was experienced in finding and flying into dangerous places with buildings, overhead wires and terrain in order to rescue and save lives. Tony after a great career and after serving as mayor decided to move to Ft Lauderdale, Florida with his wife. There they started his company. He was joined by his long-term friend and fellow State Trooper Benny who is his co pilot and business partner.

Within an hour Tony did his calculations on what was needed to do the flight and at first he offered to fly to New Smyrna Beach, where the congressman is renting a \$14,000 a month vacation rental house and return with him to Ft Lauderdale before they departed. The congressman instead told him he would just rent a jet service ride to Tony's Airport. The congressman brought along with him a guy named Brian Young. It took some time that night for the congressman to arrive. Tony called his co-pilot Benny who agreed to go along with him. They departed and headed to the Grand Turks and Caicos Island airport. Tony called ahead to the airport and asked them to stay open because the Airport closed at midnight, Tony paid them to stay open. They arrived after midnight, refueled, and headed to the Dominican Republic Airport in Puerto Plata, arriving around 5:30 AM. Tony and Benny spent time during the day to go over their destination point. The Congressman and his buddy Brian Young slept during the day because Tony's experience during his State Trooper days was to go in and get criminals on raids was best done between 2 am and 3 am. He told the congressman and his friend that was

when he was going. Tony used his iPhone and google maps app to determine the layout of the yard of the house where he was going to land. He blew up the map as large as he could to calculate his landing path and determined that he could do it. He also used his Google map App to route his flight path thru the valley that was the direct path to the Port au Prince location. He did not use any other types of devices to calculate his mission planning. He also determined that the 10 people he was going to pick up was just enough to allow him do just one flight without over loading the helicopter. He determined that the people who he was picking up must not carry on any baggage, because the Congressman and his friend insisted on coming along for the ride to the rendezvous location. They did not need to come along. Tony and Benny had the mission planned to the details they needed based on their years of experience in the highway patrol. He decided to let the congressman and his friend ride along in the back of the helicopter. That night, the helicopter departed and they informed the Dominican Airport Authorities (Benny spoke Spanish) that they were going to fly along the coast of Haiti and do a humanitarian determination mission and fly back. Tony asked the congressman if he had gotten permission to cross the border into Haiti, and he was flashed a paper leading Tony to believe he had State Department and Haitian Government flight clearance to land in Haiti. Tony took him for his word that they were authentic. Tony and Benny lifted off in the Sikorsky helicopter and instead of going along the coast they headed straight to the valley between the mountain ranges which was also the shortest route into the orphanage area approximately 20 miles across the border. The clouds were low that night and Tony Marinelli was able to fly his Tropic Air Rescue helicopter a little over 200 to 300 feet above the valley terrain. He did have Infra-red night vision goggles and shared his extra pairs with the congressman and his friend. The congressman and his friend were taking pictures and videos as they journeyed into Haiti and back out. A few minutes before Tony and Benny reached the destination point, he called to the back of the helicopter and told the congressman to call the guy they were retrieving to start turning the lights on and off at the house so that they could locate them and know for sure that they were there. Cell phone towers were still operating and at 200 feet above the ground cell phones work well. The congressman made the call. As Tony neared the location he descended below the clouds and the entire city of Port Au Prince appeared before their eyes, the city was not in darkness, it was well lit up and his calculations put him immediately within eye site of the house with lights flickering on and off. The inexperienced Congressman asked Tony if he was going to circle around the house and Tony said, "Hell no, I going straight in the way I planned it". He landed the helicopter straight down into the yard. He said it looked exactly liked he saw it on Google maps. Benny slid open the door and they all yelled for the people to run and jump into the helicopter as blades were whirling above them. They did not see any of the children left behind. The adult volunteers rushed out of the house and into the helicopter, with them yelling, "No baggage". "It took 67 seconds from landing to taking off again to squeeze everyone in", Tony said. They lifted off and beelined back to the Dominican Republic twenty miles away. It was still dark when they arrived at a different airport in the Dominican Republic. Airport security came rushing out. The airport person who first saw them was shocked that they landed at his airport. It was an unauthorized stop. The security guard called for backup, police cars came rushing in with flashing lights and sirens. They questioned them and then they saw the white people in the helicopter and they went berserk and lots of excitement ensued in Spanish. Dominican Republic police and guards kept them at the airport until the Dominican Republic Interior Minister and a U.S. Embassy official came to see them. They got cleared things up. The U.S. Embassy had the orphanage adult volunteers go to a hotel and got them passage back to America. The congressman took a commercial flight to Washington. That left Tony and Benny with their helicopter to fly back to Turks and Caico Island to refuel and head back to the West Ft.

Lauderdale Airport. When Tony and Benny arrived, their workers ran out to greet them and yelling about the congressman being on the news and gloating about himself rescuing people in Haiti and made no mention of Tropic Air Rescue, and Tony and Benny doing the mission. What a shock!! It was a reporter from the Tribune that came to interview Tony later after she heard the news. Apparently, the congressman was bragging about a second rescue and was bragging about how he got 13 more people out and was holding a baby, etc. Tony said that he didn't know anything about that. Last thing he heard was that the congressman went back to Washington and was voting again (he missed two days of voting on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> and was voting again on the 13<sup>th</sup>).

Tony is a hero, A man with a great heart, a humble man with integrity. When asked if he got paid for the congressman's request, he said, "Aall I got was a handshake." Tony calmly said, "Who am I, I am just the guy who owns the helicopter, I am just the pilot who flew the helicopter and planned it all out" " I am just the guy who fuels up the helicopter to make sure it gets to where it's going and back". "But since the guy is a congressman, he gets the story ... (glory)."

Tony and Benny, New Jersey State Troopers with honorable records and careers, took the courage to do what the congressman pleaded them to do are proud of what they did it, because great men do spur of the moment acts when called upon. They do not brag about it and they are glad that they accomplished the mission for Americans. It just so happened that the U.S. State Department and the Florida Department of Emergency Management was contacting Tony and his company to do helicopter pickups for children left behind and to carry babies and children of American Citizens to the Haiti Airport which was still open for Flights in and out of the Country. People are unable to make it to the airport because of roadblocks and gangs and a shortage of gasoline. They need helicopter transport to get thru. Tony and his team are still doing helicopter trips bringing stranded folks to the airport so that Florida and U.S. State Department Flights can fly them back to the States.

Just after the Congressman departed back to Washington with his friend, Tony went into Haiti again and rescued 13 people including women, children and babies and a Florida Jet took them bring to Florida. The Congressman was not there this time. When Tony and Benny landed at the Haiti Airport with the families, they got into the jet to fly to Sanford, Florida. As the jet was taking off and they were about to get back into their Tropic Air Rescue Helicopter, A Haitian official said that he had to fine Tropic Air Rescue for not getting approval to land in their country. Tony said that he was willing to pay the fine each time he landed in the country and asked what it would be (thinking it would be only about a couple hundred dollars). The Haitian Official said \$3,000. Tony went into panic. He radioed the pilot of the Jet and asked him if he had 3 grand on him. The Pilot said, "yes we always carry cash in situations like this". The jet turned around on the run way and headed back to the terminal area. The Pilot gave the cash to Tony, Tony handed it over to the official. The jet started taxing away again, with jet engines roaring beginning its taxis way to takeoff. As the jet was leaving once again the Haitian Official said, "You know what I don't think I charged you a big enough fine, I am going to make it another \$3,000". Tony was in real panic this time. He was quick to react and said to the official, "you know, I might just have some cash in my helicopter", and the helicopter was already running with Benny in the pilot seat with blades twirling. Tony ran to his helicopter and yelled. "go go go, lets get out of here!!!" and they took off. They arrived back in the Dominican Republic. It was shortly after that, the U.S. State Department and Florida Officials worked out arrangements for Tony and his company to resume flights without such a thing happening again. While doing the interview on March 27<sup>th</sup>, I had to wait for Tony to get out of a zoom call

with the U.S. State Department and Florida Emergency Management Officials planning for the next mission.

This Article is dedicated to Tony, Benny and all the State Troopers who are the valiant first responders that deserve our appreciation and respect and we give honor to Tony and Benny for their heroic efforts.

#### *The Congressman was Cory Mills*

*Cory Mills, whose primary residence was in Virginia while he running in Florida, and even after he was sworn in to Congress filed official documents with the State of Virginia, and signed Deeds that he resided in Virginia in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Mills is currently being investigated by the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) on several counts of alleged campaign violations. House Ethics Complaints have also been filed regarding his activities. One being on how he came up with \$1.8 million to loan his campaign when he had less than \$300k in his bank accounts. His PACEM LLCs are millions in debt to a Cayman Island feeder fund with Waygar Capital Inc. of Canada acting as the Agent for them. Mills owes over \$385,213 to several campaign vendors from the 2022 election. At the end of December 2022, he reported to the FEC to have had only \$26,022 in cash in his campaign. Mills has had several Federal Internal Revenue Service Tax Liens ranging from \$10,000 to over \$500,000 personally and with his Pacem LLC. He also has had several mechanics liens for not paying his contractors doing work in his home in Virginia, his debt-ridden Perry, Florida LLC, and his Pacem office in Falls Church Virginia amounting to over \$400,000. In September 2021 he claimed he had his team do the first overland ground rescue when in fact 15 guys from the Sentinel Foundation were involved in helping a Afghani refugee who was visiting her mother and father back in Afghanistan missed her flight back to America. She made it to the border and guys like, Matt Murphy, Tim Zaj and Yusaf tricked the Taliban to open the gate and let her cross the river bridge into Uzbekistan. The same Congressman is bragging that he rescued Americans from Israel, when in fact he showed up in a taxi at the hotel where the tourists were staying and rode their tour bus to the Jordan border like the State Department was having thousands of tourists doing the days before, during and after. The church group was stuck with a \$39,000 flight bill. Mills later met people at the JFK airport who got a flight with the Mercury1 Charity while at the same time thousands of people were constantly flying in and out of Israel airports at the time. Mills claims he rescued them. Each time in these rescue stories Mills is claiming, " his team, his group, his money, his involvement with several rescues", after he returned to his home, while the real guys were doing the real rescues after he left each photo op. The Haiti helicopter ride and not mentioning Tony and Benny and their great company in what they did has to be acknowledged, please share this great story of heroism and sadly the pathological lies of a freshman congressman who should not be in that office.*