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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2014

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High, 49. Low, 37. > B10  
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# STRANGE NOISE, THEN DISASTER

Investigators search for answers after  
KOMO-TV helicopter plunges to street, killing 2

Crash puts focus on Seattle's dozen helipads,  
national worries about helicopter safety



MIKE SIEGEL / THE SEATTLE TIMES

**WRECKAGE:** The helicopter fell five stories and landed on Broad Street, breaking apart and bursting into flames. One man in a car hit by the wreckage was seriously burned.

By JACK BROOM, STEVE MILETICH  
and BRIAN M. ROSENTHAL  
Seattle Times staff reporters

Witnesses heard an "unusual noise" just before a KOMO-TV helicopter slammed to the ground near the Space Needle on Tuesday morning, killing a veteran Seattle photojournalist and the pilot as they were departing from the station's roof, a federal safety investigator said hours after the crash.

No cause was immediately known. "Right now, we're looking at everything," Dennis Hogenson, acting deputy chief of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Western Pacific Region, said during a news conference near the crash site.

The crash also left a driver seriously burned, after his car was struck by the falling aircraft and burst into flames. The helicopter came to a rest on Broad Street, just south of the Space Needle, breaking apart.

Mayor Ed Murray went to the scene, underscoring the tragic events that put KOMO-TV in the rare position of both covering a major news story and dealing with the shocking blow.

Investigators are looking into the possibility the helicopter's main rotor hit the tail, but all potential causes are under investigation, Hogenson said.

One witness described a "whining" sound from  
See > CRASH, A4

## The men who died



**Bill Strothman,**  
photographer  
"A kind and gentle man ... he had tremendous empathy."



**Gary Pfitzner,**  
pilot  
"Always had a smile on his face, loved what he did, loved to be able to fly."

**MORE COVERAGE INSIDE**  
Feds focusing on frequent helicopter crashes > A4  
Families, colleagues remember victims > A5  
Newsroom's shock: "Our own chopper in a ball of fire." > A5



MIKE SIEGEL / THE SEATTLE TIMES

**KOMO GRIEVES:** Denise Whitaker, left, an anchor who has been at KOMO-TV for a decade, stands with others across the street from the helicopter wreckage where her colleagues died.

# Putin takeover signals a different kind of 'Cold War'

## ANALYSIS

Russia's annexation of Crimea creates 'Europe free-for-all'

By PETER BAKER  
The New York Times

WASHINGTON — A month ago, most Americans could not have found Crimea on a map. But its lightning-quick takeover by Moscow has

abruptly redrawn the geopolitical atlas and may have decisively ended a 25-year period of often tumultuous but also constructive relations between the United States and Russia.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Washington and Moscow had struggled to replace their Cold War rivalry with a new form of partnership, one that was tested by crisis after crisis but

that endured in its own peculiar way. After each rupture, whether over Kosovo or Iraq or Georgia, came another reset that put the two powers back onto an uneasy equilib-

See > CRIMEA, A10

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