Mr. James E. Hall, Chairman  
National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW  
Washington, DC 20594-2000

Dear Chairman Hall:

Please find enclosed a transcript of the 30 April 1999 briefing provided to the NTSB's Witness Group in connection with CIA's assistance to the FBI on the TWA Flight 800 investigation. This briefing was the result of your request to CIA earlier this year to help the Witness Group understand CIA's evaluation of witness statements. After attending the briefing and reviewing the briefing transcript, the head of the NTSB's Witness Group, Dr. David Mayer, requested that CIA release the transcript to the NTSB for placement on the public record. In an effort to assist in such an important matter, I am providing the transcript as requested.

A commercial transcription service prepared this transcript of the entire discussion that took place at the 30 April briefing. In accordance with Section 6 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 and CIA disclosure policies, CIA asked the transcription service to substitute appropriate titles for the names of our employees. Similarly, we substituted a title for the name of a Missile and Space Intelligence Center employee mentioned in the discussion. The names of other attendees, however, remain in the transcript for an NTSB determination regarding their public release.

I trust that this information will be helpful and commend the difficult and hard work that the Witness Group and others have done in investigating the Flight 800 tragedy. Please let me know if CIA can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

David W. Carey  
Executive Director
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
BRIEFING ON TWA FLIGHT 800
National Transportation Safety Board
490 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Fifth Floor Boardroom
Washington, D.C.
Friday, April 30, 1999
10:00 a.m.
PRESENT:
BERNARD LOEB        J. DENNIS RODRIGUES
DAN CAMPBELL        JAMES M. WALTERS
ROBERT YOUNG        JOSEPH MANNO
DAVID MAYER

ALSO PRESENT: PETER GOELZ; ERIK GROSOOF; PAUL SCLAMM;
MATT FURMAN; DANA SANZO; HEATHER KNAPP AND CIA
OFFICIALS

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MR. MAYER: As you all know, we've been working for quite a while to arrange this meeting and there have been a number of logistical issues to work out. Some of you folks have rearranged your schedules to be here and I greatly appreciate that. And we have some representatives from the Central Intelligence Agency who are here to talk to us today about their work for the FBI in studying the statements of the eyewitnesses, and I'll just ask you guys to introduce yourselves and go at it. If I can be of any help, just let me know.

DD/CIA/OTI: Good morning. I'm the deputy director of the Office of Transnational Issues (OTI). With me today are two of my analysts who assisted the FBI with the TWA 800 crash landing, and a representative from the CIA's Office of General Counsel. Like all of you in private industry know, we don't go anywhere without our lawyer.

In a moment, CIA Analyst #1 will address the CIA's analysis of the eyewitness accounts pertaining to the crash. But first, I'd like to make
some opening comments to provide you some background on the CIA's work and how we got involved. And nothing we're going to tell you here today is classified. Everything here will be unclassified.

As you're no doubt aware, there was the possibility this was caused by international terrorism, potentially one of the most lethal such acts ever perpetrated against the United States. With this in mind, the FBI requested the CIA's assistance almost immediately after the crash. As you may also know, the FBI is the lead federal agency for investigating acts of international terrorism committed inside the U.S. borders. Because international terrorism is an authorized CIA area of analysis, the CIA agreed to assist the FBI.

Federal investigators focused early on on three possible causes for the crash: a bomb, a missile, or mechanical failure. Because of the eyewitness accounts of something ascending and culminating in explosion, CIA missile analysts placed particular attention on the possibility that a missile was involved.
Over the course of our work, the FBI provided us with summaries of statements from 244 people who claimed to have witnessed the crash or its aftermath.

These summaries did not all arrive at the same time, but were provided over a period of 14 months. Some reports contained sight and sound observations and most included information that could be used to determine the location of eyewitnesses at the time of the crash. CIA analysts relied on these summaries and did not independently interview any eyewitnesses, although on one occasion they accompanied FBI special agents when the FBI reinterviewed two eyewitnesses.

The FBI provided us with the following National Transportation Safety Board material: two sets of radar tracking data. One was from a radar at Islip providing data sampled once every 4.6 seconds; the other was from a radar at Riverhead providing data sampled once every 12 seconds. They provided us: The precise time of -- the aircraft's location, altitude, speed and heading at the moment the CVR and
FDR ceased operating; A salvage map showing the approximate locations where some of the Flight 800 debris were found; Meteorological data, including the winds aloft.

The FBI also provided us with NTSB's observations that an abrupt sound was recorded just before the CVR ceased operating, that no other unusual activity was recorded either on the CVR or the FDR, that the front third of the aircraft was believed to have separated from the fuselage, from the main fuselage, soon after the initial explosion.

CIA analysts also visited the aircraft reconstruction hangar at Calverton on several different occasions.

Additional information and tools that we obtained independently included infrared data from a military satellite; Delorme Version 4.0 Street Atlas USA mapping software to plot the relative locations of the eyewitnesses; and detailed maps of the Long Island area. Our analysis of the FBI summaries took more than a year and required more than 2000 man-hours of work.
Analysts went to places where the summaries of the eyewitnesses said they had been. They also visited specific vantage points of a few eyewitnesses whose summaries had given particularly detailed descriptions that included readily identifiable reference points. At several of these locations, videotape templates were made to use in our analysis and as backdrops for scenes in the video which we will show you shortly. CIA analysts first concluded that eyewitnesses had observed only the burning aircraft in various stages of crippled flight, rather than a missile attacking the aircraft, on 30 December 1996. Preliminary analytic results were provided to the FBI via telephone within 24 hours of the time we made our initial conclusion.

Over the next 10 months we were in continuous contact with the FBI as we documented and refined our work. It took about a month for CIA analysts to vet the analysis internally and prepare a formal briefing for the FBI investigators and special agents. This briefing took place in Calverton on 6 February 1997. We provided a written summary of
CIA's analysis to FBI Assistant Director James Kallstrom on 28 March 1997. CIA analysts briefed their work to Mr. Kallstrom on 18 June 1997, and again on 22 October 1997 at his request.

At the conclusion of the October session, Mr. Kallstrom expressed his desire to use the CIA video "TWA Flight 800: What Did the Eyewitnesses See?" at his news conference announcing the suspension of the criminal investigation, scheduled for the following month. The CIA concurred and prepared the videotape for public release.

What I'd like to do now is introduce CIA Analyst #1, who was the lead analyst in our work. He's going to give you an opportunity to see the CIA video one more time, and then open up the discussion about any questions you may have concerning CIA's analysis. CIA Analyst #1.

CIA ANALYST #1: We'd like you to see this video one more time now. This was the primary product that we produced for the FBI that summarized our analysis and conclusions that we arrived at. (Video was played.)
MR. MAYER: CIA Analyst #1, it dawned on me while the video was playing that you guys introduced yourselves and I never asked the members of my group who they were. So if you guys wouldn't mind, why don't you tell CIA Analyst #1 who you are and what organization you're with and just a little bit about your role in the investigation.

Go ahead, Bob.

MR. YOUNG: I'm Bob Young, I'm the director of Flight Safety at TWA.

MR. RODRIGUES: Dennis Rodrigues, Boeing Air Safety Accident Investigation.

MR. WALTERS: I'm Jim Walters with the Air Line Pilots Association.

MR. MANNO: Joseph Manno.

CIA ANALYST #1: Probably the most important thing to take away from this video is that the vast majority of the eyewitnesses saw only the last 10 to 15 seconds of what took place.

We know from sound propagation analysis and from the radar analysis we did that the time from when the plane exploded to when it hit the water was...
roughly 49 seconds. Therefore, if somebody described seeing something in the last 10 to 15 seconds of this, we're confident it's not a missile. They didn't see a missile destroy the aircraft.

We also know from the sound propagation analysis that the left wing of the plane breaks away from the plane 42 seconds after that initial explosion, and there's a lot of eyewitnesses that describe seeing two fireballs descend to the ocean and they give the rough times they think that took. They give numbers like six seconds or seven seconds.

Our propagation analysis tells us that took about seven seconds. It's very consistent with what these eyewitnesses saw. If an eyewitness describes something that took several seconds and culminated in an explosion which then was followed by two fireballs descending to the ocean's surface, we're very confident those eyewitnesses did not see a missile cause an explosion on the plane, which occurred 49 seconds before the plane hit the water.

What I'd like to do here is allow you --

David's told me you have a lot of questions, and
rather than run through a briefing that you've written all the answers -- to -- probably a more productive use of our time, if you would just ask me questions, I'll address them one at a time. I've brought some materials that I can show if I think they are directly applicable to the question you ask. Or we can just talk out the details.

MR. MAYER: Anybody have any questions to start off? I know over time, as we've worked together, there's been questions. I've tried to pass some on. But this is really the opportunity for you guys to ask whatever's on your mind about the videotape.

MR. MANNO: I've got one. I may have missed it on the tape. How many witnesses did you actually talk to?

CIA ANALYST #1: We didn't --

MR. MANNO: How many statements did you review?

CIA ANALYST #1: There were statements from 244 eyewitnesses. Now, because of the way the FBI obtains these, we had more than 244 documents. They
produced something that's called 302 statements.

These are summaries that the FBI produces from
interviews they do. They also do condensed versions
of these. And so on occasion, you'll have maybe a
two-page report that's condensed down to one or two
paragraphs.

We asked to have all the materials we
possibly could have. It's much more valuable to us
to have a complete 302 than it is to have just a
summary of a 302. I'll give you an example of why.

We needed -- in the process of finding out where
these eyewitnesses are, we need to know where they're
standing. And sometimes the statement would be,
well, "I was standing in my backyard." Well, you
need to know where the backyard is. We could take
the Delorme mapping software and give it an address,
we could plot it on the computer screen and then do a
calculation of how far that eyewitness was from where
the plane was when it exploded. Now the location of
the plane is based on the radar tracking data plus
the on-board recordings that were made before the
power was lost on the plane.
MR. WALTERS: Of those 244 there was a statement in the tape that -- about 200 were used later as a -- kind of to verify what you already had. Is it fair to say that you started with a much smaller core group of witnesses that you used initially?

CIA ANALYST #1: Because of the way the FBI provided data to us, we didn't get all 244, we didn't get reports from all 244 eyewitnesses at once in the beginning. We got them slowly over a period of really about 10 months. We started out very early on with probably 30 or 40 reports. I think as we started to make progress, the FBI was willing to give us more information and they were tending initially to give us reports that looked like they may be descriptions from somebody who had seen a missile -- flare or fireworks descriptions.

Now it turns out some of the most valuable reports for our analysis were witnesses who clearly did not see a missile. Didn't think they had seen a missile, didn't even think they had seen a flare or firework. They saw the fireball falling to the
surface of the ocean.

One really good witness in that group said he saw the fireball hit the surface of the water and then simultaneously, almost simultaneously heard the sound of the explosion. That allowed us to go back and calculate how long it took from the initial explosion to when the plane hit the water, even though that particular eyewitness clearly didn't see anything even near to the time the plane exploded.

There are eyewitnesses, even after the fact, after this analysis came out, who thought that their descriptions had been discounted by us because they said "I didn't hear sound, how could CIA have used our work if I didn't hear sound?" What you can do is you can map their description into other eyewitnesses whose timing we could specify, and if they're consistent, they then add to the story.

And that's pretty much what happened.

MR. WALTERS: The loud -- the very loud explosion that a lot of this is based on, my limited experience with fuel air explosions and my experience over at Grumman Airplane, I'm not sure that I
personally would think that the loudest explosion would have been the initial event, that indeed it might have been something later on in the sequence. And I'm curious how that was approached, if that indeed was part of your consideration.

CIA ANALYST #1: Let me explain how that would affect the analysis. Although I am confident that the center fuel tank explosion was the source of that very loud sound, let's temporarily assume that that sound was made later by something else that exploded on the plane or near the plane.

MR. WALTERS: Or a structural breakup.

CIA ANALYST #1: Or a structural breakup.

Now, it's a very loud sound. It shook a 70-ton bridge 11 miles away. But if that sound was made later, the effect it would have on our analysis is that the plane -- the time from the initial explosion to the time that the plane hit the water -- would be greater than 49 seconds and what that would mean is that somebody who thinks they may have seen a missile destroy the aircraft would see something that occurred even earlier than 49 seconds before the
plane hit the water. So in that respect, it would make our conclusion even stronger. Let's go the other way.

MR. LOEB: For example, if the sound they heard was the left wing coming apart and the huge eruption, then you've got even more than the 49 seconds prior to, and the events that occurred all occurred in even more subsequent to the initial thing. So --

MR. WALTERS: Right, and while it might not have much of a bearing on whether or not it was a missile, it could have more bearing on trajectory analysis of what the airplane was actually doing at the initial event. You see what I'm saying, timing is a big issue not just for missiles but for what actually is occurring as the airplane is having an event take place on board.

CIA ANALYST #1: That's true. Now our primary goal, as you're aware here, was to address the question "What did the eyewitnesses see?"

MR. WALTERS: Yes.

CIA ANALYST #1: And in particular, could
they have seen a missile destroy the aircraft.

MR. WALTERS: Yes.

CIA ANALYST #1: Although through the process of our analysis we actually were able to reconstruct a pretty good feel for what generally happened to the plane from the time of the initial explosion to when it hit the water, and we animated that here, that's not central to our conclusion that the eyewitnesses did not see a missile destroy the plane.

MR. WALTERS: I understand.

CIA ANALYST #1: While we're on it, let's address another question in terms of the sound propagation analysis. What if somehow that explosion occurred earlier? Because if it occurred much earlier, and it was near the plane, now the sound could arrive at the eyewitnesses as the plane's hitting the water and the time between when the plane exploded and when it hit the water could be shorter.

The reason we don't think that happened is if you had a sound that was loud enough to shake a 70-ton bridge 11 miles away, and it occurred near the
aircraft, we would think that that sound would be recorded on the recorders, probably on both the cockpit voice recorder and the data recorder. It would shake the plane. So we don't think that happened. Now there are other reasons I won't go into, there are a lot of other reasons for thinking that didn't happen in terms of the description of the sound as it's heard up and down the beach, up and down Long Island --

MR. WALTERS: The quality of the sound, you mean?

CIA ANALYST #1: Not the quality, but the timing. What we can do it's kind of interesting, as people are describing what they're seeing. This one witness I mentioned earlier was relatively close to the plane compared to some of the other eyewitnesses. You go down the beach, some of the witnesses that were further away describe the same thing. They describe the two fireballs coming down and then they describe the sound arriving later.

In one case, one eyewitness described actually counting the seconds. She counted seconds.
She said, "the plane hit the water and I counted about four seconds and then I heard the sound." She's playing this back in her mind. And the distance was consistent, as we moved down the beach, was consistent with the different arrival times of the sound as it was reported by the eyewitnesses.

Now you don't expect those descriptions to be correct to within a second or two, but in general the sound propagation made sense. The ones we trust the most are ones where somebody says, "I saw something and I heard something almost simultaneously." That happened, for example, with the eyewitness who was on a boat, who described seeing a flare-like object and then realized what he was seeing was an airplane. And he actually saw a wing detach. He described it. This is in an eyewitness report. That report was made before the work was done by the NTSB that said that indeed a wing had detached. So we placed a fair amount of faith in that eyewitness.

A very loud sound occurred right as that detachment occurred. That told us -- we know where
that witness was -- told us that it was 42 seconds from when the plane exploded to when that wing detached. That was very important because a lot of other eyewitnesses didn't realize it was a wing detaching. They just saw the two fireballs. We could now describe, we could now map these eyewitnesses into the earlier descriptions. That, by the way, includes the helicopter pilot, who I believe has gone on record saying he was afraid that maybe his description wasn't used as much as it should have been. We did use his description. He described the same fireball that we think was described by some of the other witnesses.

MR. RODRIGUES: You said that the loud explosion you heard was -- you were confident you said that the loud explosion you heard was the center tank that resulted in shaking the bridge. The problem I'm having a little bit is the center tank explosion is categorized as a low-order explosion, would it still emit a sound, a loud sound given a low-order explosion, whatever a "low-order explosion" means, from the structural breakup, that's the
CIA ANALYST #1: Our reason for concluding that -- for thinking that the loud sound was produced by the center fuel tank exploding -- is that it's a confined tank with fumes in it. If you're going to have a loud explosion associated with the plane, near the plane, you ask yourself, "What could have produced that sound?" We've heard speculation, things like well, a missile warhead. Not nearly loud enough to do that sort of thing. It wouldn't be relevant here because we're dealing with what the eyewitnesses saw. We're trying to -- we're placing what they saw later. But in terms of producing the sound, it seemed to us that this was the only way to get a sound that loud.

Now we were aware that there is contention, some people saying that that sound could have been made by the fuel tank exploding, others saying that it maybe wasn't. There are also, there are eyewitnesses who report hearing several sounds, not just one sound. They hear a loud sound followed by several other sounds. There's two ways that could
happen. You could have another source for additional sounds, and we had speculated that possibly the engines stalling could produce those sounds. They produce loud sounds but not as loud, certainly not as loud as the sound it would take to shake a 70-ton bridge 11 miles away.

MR. WALTERS: On that same issue, that 70-ton bridge, that's a very good witness and that was an important thing too. What surprises me is there was a number of other witnesses in the same general area that don't recall a particularly loud sound. And maybe that's typical, but it seems kind of hard to justify.

CIA ANALYST #1: We were concerned about that a little bit. One of the things we -- Now, there are a lot of eyewitnesses that reported hearing a loud sound. They even describe it as a concussion sound. If you look up and down the beach, the witnesses that tend to hear the sounds tend to be more easterly. If you go west an equal distance from where the plane was when it exploded, those witnesses don't hear sound. So for whatever reason, the sound
appeared to have propagated forward.

But there's also another explanation. We did find a few eyewitnesses who were relatively near eyewitnesses that heard sounds that didn't report hearing sounds. They were right on the beach, and we actually went down to the beach and when you're standing on the beach you realize that this may have occurred: You're getting waves breaking and as a wave breaks, if you're standing right near the wave, it could obscure a sound. The timing of the waves could be such that literally you could have a person hearing a wave break right as that sound arrives. And somebody else down the beach, the waves break and they would hear that sound in between.

MR. YOUNG: Could I ask you a quick question. I think in the literature that I've read, to produce the kinds of sound we're talking about, would be a minimum of a thousand pounds of TNT at that many miles. I don't see how we could get a center tank to make that sound.

In any case, I'm certainly no expert on it but looking at some of the literature, the question I
have is one of the witnesses that you used, I believe in your summary was the Eastwind Airlines captain. We also had an opportunity, thanks to the board, to talk with him and he indicated to us that he watched the airplane for a significant period of time prior to the event occurring. He described the event as an expanding fireball. We asked him at that time whether he saw anything associated with the airplane ascend from that fireball, which of course it would have had -- he would have had to see if the airplane boost up and he told us he did not see anything. And he was between 15 and 19 miles -- looking right at it and -- above it, and I think that should finish. If it had ascended, certainly he would have been concerned because it would have ascended right through his altitude.

CIA ANALYST #1: Based on our analysis of the 302 information from that eyewitness, we think the fireball that he's describing is -- I believe he describes, he describes two separate fireballs. Again, he's one of these eyewitnesses that is seeing, at that point, describing what's happening near the
end. Now, he also described seeing a light earlier that leads into the fireball. I think what he is seeing is possibly originally a light on the plane itself but at the point at which the front of the plane comes off I think what he is seeing is what some of the other early eyewitnesses see, which is a white light, not from the plane (from the plane's lights) but a fire trailing from the plane. And I think that leads into a fireball which then descends to the ocean's surface.

MR. YOUNG: Would you characterize then a fire from the airplane, probably with whatever residual fuel was available, to be a white light?

CIA ANALYST #1: I'm not qualified to characterize what color the light would be. The eyewitnesses described the light as white very often. Others described it as whitish orange. We didn't put a lot of emphasis on the precise colors they were using to describe the light. We tried to get a sense of how early they were seeing it.

Now, a very important point I think to make here is that there may be only one ground-based
eyewitness who saw the light right after the plane exploded. That's the eyewitness who was on the bridge. The reason I say that is he gave us reference points we could deal with. He described two houses, one house above which the white light first appeared. He then said he saw the light, I think he used the phrase "zigzag" for about 15 seconds, disappear for two to three seconds, and then he sees a fireball in the sky. The fireball then comes down and falls behind a different house. Now we were able to go to where this eyewitness was standing. We actually made a template, which is the one we used in the video. When you see those two houses, that's right where we think he was standing. We had a camera right at the height that he would be seeing this at.

We can take the radar data, we know where the plane was when it exploded. It's where he said that white light first appeared. We know where the plane hit the water. It's where he said the fireball fell down behind that other house. That made us very confident that he was seeing just the plane. Now

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when we looked at that, when we started doing that analysis, we didn't have any preconceived notions of what we were looking at. We thought perhaps if this was an eyewitness who was going to be describing a missile, we would be able to use those reference points to determine perhaps where the missile was launched from.

It was in the process of doing that analysis that we realized this key eyewitness probably saw only the airplane in various stages of destruction rather than a missile attacking the plane.

MR. YOUNG: Well, I guess, CIA Analyst #1, the question I have still from our speaking with this one gentleman was he was leveling his airplane at 16,000, now ours was about 137 or 8, your analysis has it zooming to above his altitude. And he's closing at a rather rapid rate, I mean, even if the 747 is stopped and it was just falling down, and he indicated to us that he saw nothing, and he would be looking at about 400,000 pounds of airplane and whatever zooming up to about a thousand feet above
his altitude, I think that he would have noticed it.

We asked him specifically and he said that as far as
he was concerned nothing of a large magnitude came
out of the top of the fireball. So that's the reason
I had that question.

CIA ANALYST #1: He was about; I believe,
his estimate was 15 to 20 miles away. He was further
away than a lot of the other eyewitnesses but perhaps
an advantage he had is that he's at a different
view. Like I say, we took the description that we
had in the 302 the FBI provided us, we took that very
seriously, we analyzed it along with the other
descriptions.

Go back to something else here in terms of
how high that plane went after the initial
explosion. We had an aerodynamicist, an engineer
who's very experienced. He's a pilot and he also
built his own airplane. Took him about eight years.
He was working with several aerodynamicists at Boeing
as he proceeded through this analysis. We were
trying to match aerodynamic information along with
radar information that we had and come up with an
estimate of what the plane did. And we were doing this so we could try to get a sense of what the eyewitnesses may have seen.

It's a very important point that it's not critical precisely how high that plane went. I think the news media have suggested the plane exploded and zoomed up and this is what the eyewitnesses saw. We know that the vast majority of eyewitnesses did not see things happening near the beginning. Even if the plane went up several thousand feet, on the ground there's maybe one eyewitness that saw that, this guy on the bridge.

I think there's a reason for that. If you read his description carefully, they're working on this bridge and there's a number of them. There's like four and there's a control room for the bridge and they're down in that room. He wanders up to take a break. And he's standing in an area on the bridge and he's looking out in the direction where this light appears in the sky. He had a reason to be looking in that direction. Just relaxing and looking. A lot of other people are on the beach,
they're talking to each other. Their attention is first drawn to this when they see a bright fireball. What he is seeing is a very faint light. In his description, it's a pinpoint of white light zigzagging up. I think it would be very possible... this is occurring right at sunset, right as the sun is setting. It's relatively light out. I think it's very reasonable that very few people would be expected to see this happen right from the beginning unless they are looking in that part of the sky.

MR. RODRIGUES: The video shows, or the video in effect says that what the eyewitnesses saw was the crippled airplane, after the nose comes off, climbing. So that's the streak of light that they're reporting. As an eyewitness --

CIA ANALYST #1: That is something that a few eyewitnesses saw. The guy on the bridge saw that. We suspect the individual on the USAir flight looking down saw that, saw it at the beginning. And there's another eyewitness we didn't refer to in the video who described seeing a light go up and over.

She described it to appear like a roller coaster, the
motion of a roller coaster. We think that she may have seen it.

The vast majority of eyewitnesses who describe something that they think may be ascending in the sky culminating in the fireball, and then two pieces falling to the ocean, we are confident that those people saw things occurring at the end and not at the beginning, regardless of what happened to the plane in the first five or 10 seconds after it exploded.

MR. WALTERS: When you say "at the end" you mean after -- what do you mean at the end?

CIA ANALYST #1: By "the end," I mean within -- as we say in the video, within the last 10 to 15 seconds before the plane hit the water. So out of this 49-second period from when the plane initially exploded to when it hit the water, most eyewitnesses are only seeing things that occur within the last 10 to 15 seconds of that 49-second period.

MR. WALTERS: And not the actual -- whatever is happening on the airplane prior to the first fireball set, at the top of the arch when it
starts to come down?

CIA ANALYST #1: That's correct. Even that fireball, which is a smaller fireball, I think that produces, that's -- The beginning of the streak in the sky, what most people describe as a streak, is that fireball. The one that occurs near the point at which the plane is at its maximum altitude.

MR. WALTERS: That's significantly different than what our review of the witness statements leads us to believe. By our count, I think we have something like 260 what we call "streak of light witnesses," which is what we determined a witness who saw something after the initial event but before the first "fireball" as being something on the airplane that's emitting strong light.

CIA ANALYST #1: How do you determine in your analysis what portion of the final disaster they're seeing? In other words, what portion of that 49-second period they're seeing?

MR. MAYER: I don't know that we've actually determined analytically what portion of the analysis they've seen. But we did reach an
agreement, and I don't have it in front of me, on
what a streak of light is, because a number of
witnesses, as you know, report seeing something they
described that was firework-like or that looked like
a point of light or fairly concentrated light in the
sky.

Generally, they described it as rising.

Many of them saw it for a very brief period of time,
five to 10 seconds. And in our reading of the
witness statements, we, as a group, identified those
witnesses who met a much tighter definition of streak
of light than I can resurrect from my memory right
this minute.

And that number was -- do you actually have
the number, Jim?

MR. WALTERS: In my notes I have 260,
having gone through and verified what we call the
streak of light, it may not be exact.

MR. LOEB: Have you done a time distance
study on any of those?

MR. MAYER: We're in the process. Heather
has gotten terribly familiar with Delorme Street
Mapper and things determining these witnesses. We're almost finished with that. I don't know that the group has necessarily determined in an analytic sense that the streak of light witnesses are necessarily seeing things right at the beginning of the event, but certainly the way their statements tend to characterize it is that's where their observations began, I think generally.

MR. YOUNG: And CIA Analyst #1, we've had access to 755 witness statements versus your 244.

CIA ANALYST #1: Right.

MR. YOUNG: We do have a fair amount of people that characterize the light. You've mentioned that you have an aerodynamics person that was on the analysis team and is a pilot. Is there anybody on your team that had experience with large aircraft of this size?

CIA ANALYST #1: Well, if we include on our team the Boeing people we were consulting with, yes.

MR. YOUNG: Okay, because I think part of your analysis, the airplane remains wings level. As it pitches up and at the very top we see the engines' ACE-FEDERAL REPORTERS, INC.
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compressors stalling for effect, I guess, symmetrically, which was nice of them to do that. It turns out that this particular engine has a huge appetite for fuel and it would be at climb power at the time. And we found out unfortunately in normal operations that without what we call positive pressure to the engines, that they tend to flame out very rapidly. And of course, with the nose off the airplane there would be no power to the electrical boost pumps to provide that positive pressure to the engines. So it's our -- at least, assumption, that probably those engines were not producing power after 17,000 feet.

So I guess my question is, if you were using the engines as developing that climb power up to that altitude, I'm curious about why that assumption was made.

CIA ANALYST #1: I asked our aerodynamicist to do a run, do a simulation where he cut off the engines within a few seconds of when the plane exploded and see if it had enough momentum and lift to produce a trajectory that would be close to what
1 we thought the eyewitnesses may have seen with our 
2 original trajectory, and the answer came back yes. 
3 So you don't have to have the engines 
4 running to have the plane appear in a way that it 
5 would have for those early eyewitnesses, and again, I 
6 repeat there's only a few of them. This isn't going 
7 to explain the vast majority that you're worried 
8 about, if you're worried about the streaks that 
9 hundreds of people have seen. We think those people 
10 have seen things near the end. But aerodynamically, 
11 the plane can ascend without power according to our 
12 aerodynamic model. 
13 MR. YOUNG: And I guess the other question 
14 I have, too. Swept wing airplanes tend to be 
15 generally unstable and once you lose 100,000 pounds 
16 or so off the nose, obviously he was using the shift 
17 of center of gravity, but I'm concerned of why he 
18 would assume that the wings would remain level in 
19 that situation. Because that's key to the airplane 
20 being able to ascend. And again, our witness at the 
21 15 or so miles said that the airplane turned and fell 
22 off to one side.
CIA ANALYST #1: When you say the witness who saw the airplane turn and fall to one side, is this the gentleman on the boat?

MR. YOUNG: No, this is the gentleman on the Eastwind airplane, the captain. He indicated, again, that he never saw any ascension, and as I say, he would only have been leveling at 16,000 feet.

CIA ANALYST #1: It was my understanding, based on the 302 information we had, that the pilot never reported seeing the plane. He only saw a light which --

MR. YOUNG: We asked him to -- specifically and he said he never could identify any part of the airplane until after the explosion and then he did see parts of the airplane.

CIA ANALYST #1: He actually claims to have seen pieces of the airplane rather than fire?

MR. YOUNG: He said two pieces followed by a trail of fire.

MR. MAYER: I think the salient point of what he is saying is the trail of fire, though. I don't remember that he's specifically saying that we
1 don't have a -- I don't believe that he's saying that
2 he saw the wings. If I recall correctly, he saw a
3 trail of flames that he believed to be the wings; I
4 don't believe he ever actually --
5 MR. YOUNG: He said two pieces of the
6 airplane trailing fire that he assumed was the wings.
7 MR. RODRIGUES: But trailing fire down.
8 CIA ANALYST #1: If he said he saw trailing
9 fire, this is consistent with the information we had
10 earlier, which was that he saw fire, but never
11 specifically referred to seeing a part of the
12 airplane itself. And that didn't surprise us because
13 of how far away he was. If he's 15 to 20 miles away,
14 witnesses that were even closer never reported seeing
15 the plane itself. They reported seeing lights in the
16 sky.
17 Now again, I would emphasize as soon as any
18 eyewitness starts talking about two fireballs
19 descending to the ocean's surface we get very, very,
20 very confident that what they are describing from
21 that point on is the last seven or so seconds of the
22 disaster before the plane hits the water.
It's one of the most consistent things that we see among all the eyewitnesses that we've looked at.

MR. MAYER: We would probably agree with that because we've certainly seen a number of statements that talk about seeing a fireball, or two fireballs fall down into the ocean.

We've been going at this for about an hour. Do you want to take just a very rapid break perhaps?

MR. LOEB: I think before you do that, you see if they have any additional questions.

MR. MAYER: What do you think, guys?

MR. RODRIGUES: I don't need a break.

MR. WALTERS: I'm fine. I'd like to keep going.

MR. MANNO: I want to bring up one point during our interview with Captain McClaine. I think he said he saw the point of the white light and followed it all the way off and on right up to the explosion event. It was enveloped by the explosion, which kind of left us wondering about the power on
the airplane and things like that. Because if the assumption is that's the landing light, that means there's power on the airplane.

CIA ANALYST #1: You're correct. Either there's power on the airplane and it's a landing light which is on all the way until the plane breaks apart. Or a landing light that he has seen earlier fades into a small fire and he cannot discriminate one from the other. You're absolutely correct.

MR. MANNO: That's something you looked at?

CIA ANALYST #1: It didn't affect our analysis in the sense that the description that he gave of multiple fireballs descending to the surface was consistent with other eyewitnesses. Other eyewitnesses described a light that they saw in the sky earlier.

MR. MANNO: I think we came away with the feeling that he was looking at a landing light. It was something on the aircraft. I'm just surprised that he said it stayed there right to the explosion and right after the fireball.
MR. RODRIGUES: Going back to the video again, showing the airplane climbing and leaving a trail of light is what the witnesses saw. In your analysis, you've put a witness on the beach --

CIA ANALYST #1: Again, I need to clarify something here. When you say what the eyewitnesses saw, there's one ground-based eyewitness that would have seen -- that we believe saw the event that early.

MR. RODRIGUES: Okay. I guess, I keep getting hung up on that and you keep correcting me.

MR. YOUNG: Well, one eyewitness that you've seen. We've seen a lot more than you have.

MR. RODRIGUES: The video presents it in such a way it leaves the viewer as thinking a composite of the eyewitnesses who saw an early event saw this (indicating). If it's only one or two, then it's not representative of all of them but that's okay. Let's just say it's one witness who saw this. That's fine. The one witness who saw it from where he was standing if he looked out to where it occurred, the nose comes off, the airplane climbs, we
agreed it will climb. What does your analysis show as far as the angle goes? I mean, what would he see?

CIA ANALYST #1: A very, very good question. The angle of the light that he sees in the sky, the ascent rate of that angle is somewhat driven by the fact that the plane is approaching him. I'll give you an example of this; if you're looking at an airplane flying directly towards you in absolutely level flight, it will appear to be ascending in the sky, because the angle of your sight to -- the line of sight to the plane is increasing as the plane approaches you.

Flight 800 was flying at an oblique angle to this eyewitness but generally approaching him. So there's some ascent that he would see even if the plane had exploded and continued to fly level. Now to explain the magnitude of the ascent that he described as well as to hit the radar points that we had -- because we have more than just his description, we have radar data -- to do both of those, we had the plane ascend somewhat after the
initial explosion. That seemed to be consistent with
the front of the airplane coming off. But again, the
magnitude of that ascent isn't directly proportional
to what he sees in the sky. I think that's a very
important point to make.

MR. RODRIGUES: Yeah, I was trying to
quantify that. If it's the one witness who is used
to derive that view, what did he see in terms of a
streak, you know, how much of an ascent was it
compared to the witnesses that we're reading. I'm
trying to balance that out or make a connection
there.

CIA ANALYST #1: The reason we could use
that eyewitness in the video is that we had a
template which contained the houses along the beach
that he used as reference points to what he was
seeing. And as a backdrop, we have radar data. We
could use the radar data, knowing where he was
standing, knowing where the houses are, to say,
"Where was the plane?" The plane is right over that
first house when it first explodes. We then have
radar data to derive the trajectory.
And we know where the plane was when it hit the water. It's behind that second house. That's how we produced that part of the video. We used the radar data along with the aerodynamic modeling and his general description. We never go to a -- we never take an eyewitness report and try to derive a trajectory directly from what the eyewitness is saying because they're giving estimates. In his particular case, because he gave us some very good reference points, he was an excellent witness.

If somebody -- for instance, if a witness says "I saw something ascending at a steep angle in the sky," you can't use a story like that to get a quantitative estimate of what the plane did.

MR. RODRIGUES: You weren't able to look at other witnesses who were in positions that would give you similar references, other people who might be more closer to a 90-degree angle, for example, through the flight path out there?

CIA ANALYST #1: Most of the good eyewitnesses, not surprisingly, are on the beach. They're along the beach, and this occurred out over
the ocean. So you have no references other than the
horizon. And even the precision of that horizon is
in question, how precisely a witness can see the
horizon at that hour of the day. But what we need to
do comparisons with the radar data is knowledge of
where the eyewitness is, and then where known
references are with respect to the fire that the
witness is describing.

MR. RODRIGUES: The difficulty I'm having
is a lot of the eyewitnesses, and we only read these
in the last few months, long after the video came
out, is quite a few eyewitnesses are talking about
something going straight up. And we try to capture
those that occurred or reported before an explosion
was seen. Or that's all they reported whatever. And
I'm trying to relate angles with various people,
various locations. And if this was really made
focusing on one individual that had a -- really good
reference points then, of course, it doesn't include
other people who were also reporting the same,
something going straight up -- maybe they didn't have
references like you said -- and try to get some
understanding really of what they're seeing. You know, what phase of that.

CIA ANALYST #1: The reason it wasn't important to us to understand what a lot of eyewitnesses who reported seeing things going up -- wasn't important for us to know what they had seen, is we could establish that they saw things that took place 10 to 15 seconds before the plane hit the water.

MR. RODRIGUES: How do you establish that, the sound?

CIA ANALYST #1: By the sound propagation analysis, and in particular, by the inclusion in a lot of these eyewitnesses' descriptions of two fireballs descending to the ocean's surface.

MR. RODRIGUES: Yeah.

CIA ANALYST #1: We know that the two-fireball separation takes place about seven seconds before the plane hits the water. Now I should ask this question here: Is there any skepticism or doubt about the analysis that establishes that it was about 49 seconds from when
the plane initially exploded to when it hit the
water? And likewise, that it's about 42 seconds from
when the plane explodes to when the left wing
detaches?

MR. WALTERS: Let me answer that with a
question. There's an event before the left wing
separates.

CIA ANALYST #1: Right.

MR. WALTERS: There's what we call the
initial fireball, which is the first highly visible
fireball in the sky. It has nothing to do with the
streak of light. But it's prior to the wing coming
off and the airplane separating. What is your
estimation of the initial event, the center tank
explosion, to the first fireball? What's the length
of time on that?

CIA ANALYST #1: Good question. We've
animated that here to be about 18 seconds. That is a
real estimate. There's no sound propagation analysis
that lets you establish when that fireball occurred.

It's driven largely by the one ground-based
eyewitness who gave us reference points and described
seeing a white light ascend for about 15 seconds,
then disappear for two to three seconds, and then in
that portion of the sky a small fireball appears.

We don't think that is the fireball that a
lot of the other eyewitnesses are describing, which
is a big fireball which almost immediately produces
two trails of fire falling to the water's surface.

Something else I guess I should say here. We think
it's reasonable, considering how dramatic this was,
that it's unlikely that somebody would look at this
in the sky, watch it for a while and then look away
and do something else. So a number that was very
valuable for us to have is: "How long was it from
when you first observed something in the sky until
the time at which you lost sight of it, whether
it's -- because it fell to the ocean's surface, or if
you're further inland, because it fell down behind
some trees or behind a house?"

It's reasonable that these people, once
they started seeing this, continued watching it. So
you get a good sense of what they're seeing by asking
them, "How long was your total observation?" Now
Unfortunately, we didn't have an opportunity to go back and do that. We were relying on the 302 reports that we had. And in several cases, those total estimates are made in those reports. In other cases, although they don't say how long their observations lasted, they do describe the two fireballs falling to the ocean's surface and we established that those -- that time duration was about seven seconds.

MR. RODRIGUES: People have different perceptions of time obviously. We all do. Did you run an extreme to see what the differences would be in terms of how long the explosion?

CIA ANALYST #1: We did this, we asked ourself this question. We played devil's advocate. Said let's temporarily assume that these eyewitnesses are seeing a missile which streaks toward the plane and causes the initial explosion. What is the total duration of their observation? How much of this must they have seen if they then continue to follow it all the way down to the time at which the fireballs hit the ocean? What it has to be is 49 seconds plus the additional time of the streak that they're seeing.
leading up to the initial explosion, if they're
seeing a missile go from the ocean's surface.

CIA Analyst #2 who does analysis on that
sort of thing had an estimate. What was your
estimate of how long it would take?

CIA ANALYST #2: It would take 10 to 15,
depending whether they were directly below or off to
the side, 10 seconds.

CIA ANALYST #1: So we're looking at 49
plus 10, maybe about a minute of looking, a minute of
observation. If you go back to the witnesses we're
describing, they don't appear to be that long with
the one exception of this witness on the bridge who
describes a fairly long ascent. And then we also
have an additional check on him because we know where
the light is when he first sees it and where the
fireball is when he loses sight of it. We have an
azimuth over where his observations took place. So
we're confident that he saw an awful lot of this,
whereas we think the other eyewitnesses -- many of
the other eyewitnesses saw only the last 10 to 15
seconds.
MR. RODRIGUES: Was he the one that said he saw a white light zigzag? Or somebody said that. Is that the one that reported it?

CIA ANALYST #1: He says he sees --

MR. RODRIGUES: White light zigzag, rising.

CIA ANALYST #1: That's correct.

MR. RODRIGUES: Was the person on the bridge the person that said that?

CIA ANALYST #1: Yes. He also --

MR. RODRIGUES: Let me interrupt a second.

CIA ANALYST #1: Sure, sure.

MR. RODRIGUES: The airplane in crippled flight, I have a problem understanding how it would zigzag. You know, if it's rolling, with the wing it would turn one way or the other. It's going to probably --

CIA ANALYST #1: He said the light is zigzagging or twinkling. I'm not convinced that that necessarily reflects precisely what the plane is doing or why the light appears to look that way to him.

MR. RODRIGUES: Okay.
CIA ANALYST #1: Let me say something else about this eyewitness because I think this is interesting. He was an important eyewitness to us. And we asked the FBI to talk to him again, and they did. In his original description, he thought he had seen a firework and that perhaps that firework had originated on the beach behind the house. We went to that location and realized that if he was only seeing the airplane, that he would not see a light appear from behind the rooftop of that house. The light would actually appear in the sky. It's high enough in the sky that that would have to happen.

When he was reinterviewed, he said that is indeed what happened. The light did appear in the sky. Now when the FBI told us that, we got even more comfortable with our theory. He also described, he was asked to describe how high in the sky above the house he thought that light appeared, and he said it was as if -- if you imagine a flag pole on top of the house it would be as if it were on the top or the tip of the flag pole.

MR. WALTERS: He's an excellent witness.
And my concern is that when all 755 statements are made available to the public, you and the public will see numerous statements that appear to be excellent witnesses that don't agree with him. And I think part of what this group has to do is address that, whether we tend to agree or disagree.

So if we seem a little skeptical, it's not because we don't believe that one witness, he was great. But there's a bunch of them in there that, from the perspective of trying to legitimately explain what happened to the airplane, it could be a problem out in public. That's my comment. The question is the Boeing aerodynamicist gave you some indication of what they would expect the airplane to do aerodynamically with the nose off the front of the airplane. Did anyone try to explain what the light might be that the airplane is emitting after the nose comes off?

From a personal point of view, I have difficulty -- I don't have difficulty with your analysis, I think it was very well done. I want to know what it is we're looking at on the airplane
that's causing such a bright light that it can be seen 40 miles away.

CIA ANALYST #1: I would think that that light would be produced by fuel burning in some way.

There was some residual fuel in the center fuel tank. If an explosion occurred, it's the fumes that explode. It's not the liquid fuel. If the integrity of the center tank is ruptured and the fuel is now dispersed into the air, and it's burning, that could be a source of that light.

MR. WALTERS: It could be. But typically, a fuel air mixture doesn't burn that way.

Typically. I mean --

CIA ANALYST #1: We did not address -- we left that type of analysis to NTSB, people that are looking at the plane itself. We're saying this is where -- the plane was in this location when that light appeared in the sky.

MR. WALTERS: Right.

CIA ANALYST #1: That's what our analysis was.

MR. RODRIGUES: To add to that, there's
residual fuel, 50 gallons, the airplane's climbing so
it has a nose-up altitude and it has even more of a
nose up altitude now because the nose is off, those
50 gallons to begin with are in the back part of the
tank. The tank exploded and vented forward, the
front part of the tank opened up. But the back part
didn't, at that point. So if this fuel is burning
it's burning in the tank and in a way that would keep
it from being visible, I think. So what's actually
burning is a question that kind of comes up.

MR. CAMPBELL: If you don't mind, I'm going
to ask CIA Analyst #1 not to answer that question.

MR. LOEB: He's handled it fine. He's
already said that's something he's not going to
analyze.

MR. RODRIGUES: We'll have to try and deal
with it.

MR. LOEB: I think there is an explanation,
but we will obviously have to deal with that, and
we'll do so, Dennis. But it's not something that
they have done.

MR. RODRIGUES: Okay.
CIA ANALYST #1: I'd like to go back to an earlier question because I think it'll come up again. You mentioned having, you said, 755 eyewitness reports, many of whom are going to be hard to explain in the context of our template of what happened to the plane because they report seeing something ascend up at a steep angle.

Many of the 244 eyewitnesses that we looked at are included in that group. We understand that these eyewitnesses think they saw something ascend at a steep angle and culminate in an explosion. If that steep angle preceded immediately a fireball which then split into two and came down, we are confident that even though they thought what they saw was something originating perhaps off the ocean's surface, streaking up and hitting the plane, that in fact, what they really saw was a fire trail in the sky which culminated in the breakup of the plane, two fireballs.

So what I'm saying is even if we only have the eyewitnesses that we were looking at, that question is going to arise. Now it's very possible,
since you have many more eyewitness reports than were
given to us by the FBI, that you have some useful
information in your reports that would have been of
value to us if we had had it. We wouldn't know that
until we had had a chance to see the reports.

MR. WALTERS: I don't know that we do. I
think some of the witnesses that you got early on are
some of the witnesses that we looked at very
carefully as well.

MR. MAYER: And to add to that, many, many,
of the statements that we got, you may have gotten as
well, I don't know. But many of the statements that
we got are extraordinarily brief. I mean, they may
be three or four sentences. And they're maybe
characterized by a witness saw a streak of light
moving upward, and the explosion, and two fireballs
falling to the water. And that probably summarizes
the entire content of a large number of statements.

MR. MANNO: And also, some of our witnesses
are late witnesses, too.

MR. MAYER: They're what?

MR. MANNO: They're late witnesses. Past
MR. MAYER: They're literally just seeing smoke rising off the water.

MR. MANNO: I mean, when they were interviewed.

MR. LOEB: When they came to our attention.

MR. MAYER: That's right.

MR. WALTERS: Were you going to add to that? One of the tasks that we have talked about as a group that would be nice to have done is a correlation of data, or a time line between information from various groups on the investigation, and you had mentioned that in your analysis. You looked at the FDR and the CVR determination as a part of your, quote, time line. And I'm curious --

CIA ANALYST #1: That's correct.

MR. WALTERS: And maybe the variance is so slight, maybe it doesn't matter at all. One of the questions that I don't know was ever answered very well was exactly when the CVR and the FDR terminated in relation to what else is going on with the airplane, and I'm curious that that 1, 2, 5 seconds,
1 you said 4 seconds, when the nose came off might have
2 been sooner or longer, but was that variation in time
3 part of your equation in your own time line? Did
4 you -- was there ever any question to your group when
5 the CVR and FDR actually ceased? Put it that way.

CIA ANALYST #1: We used the cessation time
6 of the CVR and FDR, and I believe they were within a
7 quarter second of each other in terms of the time
8 they went down. We used that to establish where the
9 plane was when the initial explosion took place,
10 because we wanted to propagate the sound from that
11 point. If there's an error in that time, if the
12 error is several seconds, it will slightly affect the
13 sound propagation analysis but not very much. And it
14 will affect it because the location of the plane will
15 be slightly different. It won't affect it linearly.
16 In other words, if the plane exploded four seconds
17 later than we think it did, it won't mean that we're
18 off in our estimate...

MR. WALTERS: By very much at all.

CIA ANALYST #1: ... by four seconds from
21 when the plane exploded to when it hit the water.
MR. WALTERS: No, I understand that. Is that data, I hate to say that, is this -- that data available? That type of time line work that you did, is that something we could see? You know, like the radar. Say, for example, correlating the radar data with the CVR. That may have been done very early on, but it was not done with the degree of precision that perhaps we would like to see done.

MR. MAYER: Are you saying the Safety Board doesn't do it?

MR. WALTERS: Well, the Safety Board did a rough one very early on, as you remember, but I don't know that that was ever followed up on with any of the witness stuff or any of what the CIA did to correlate it all.

CIA ANALYST #1: We totally relied on the work that the Safety Board did on this. It was provided to us through the FBI.

MR. LOEB: And we were working with them at the time they did this.

MR. WALTERS: So it was not an independent thing, it was done strictly with the board?
MR. LOEB: We helped them with the data that they needed, which included the CVR, FDR, and I guess you actually got the radar data from us, sir. Did you get that?

CIA ANALYST #1: All of this data was provided to us by the FBI but the information came from you. We dealt with them but they passed it on. They gave us the plot of the radar data; the times that we have for when the CVR and FDR went down came from the NTSB via the FBI. That's very important because we didn't have access, for example, to the flight data recorder or the cockpit voice recorder. The only information we used out of those was the time at which they went down and the simple statement that no -- there was no loud sound recorded prior to the one right before the recordings ceased. Those two pieces of information, that's all we used. Unfortunately, the radar data doesn't tell you precisely when the plane exploded. Because as you know, the samples -- the data we've relied on the most, which was the Riverhead radar, was sampled every 12 seconds.
MR. WALTERS: And I wonder if the radar data even really indicates the initial event you're making an assumption of, a four-second time for the nose to come off and the nose may have shown up on radar. The event itself would not have shown up on radar, it could have actually been any period of time, although we know it was much closer than later.

But --

CIA ANALYST #1: The judgment that the nose came off within four seconds after the initial explosion was a conclusion that was totally obtained from --

MR. LOEB: And our data is not based, as you know, on one radar. This event was picked up on more than one --

MR. WALTERS: Right. Once it started to break up. That's my point is that the CVR and the FDR don't necessarily correlate exactly with the radar because the radar doesn't tell you when the initial event --

MR. LOEB: No. But we have radar from
different sources and they're not all precisely
making sweeps at the same time and so you couple that
with the FDR and CVR and we're fairly comfortable
that we have pretty good time line on that. Now,
they didn't have access to all of that when they were
doing this. However, before this presentation was
made, we did, we did talk to CIA Analyst #1, and our
people were helping them and with -- in fact, some of
this very kind of thing to make certain that they
weren't going to be off significantly in their time
line.

MR. MAYER: I have a feeling that just as a
personal comment, if you guys were starting your work
from scratch today, you would find absolutely
everything you would need to do the time line work to
do --

MR. LOEB: Yeah, they would be in a much
better position.

MR. MAYER: And you'd be able to find it
right in our public docket right now.

MR. LOEB: They'd be in a much better
position today than they were, but nevertheless,
having said that, before this was released we did get a chance to help them a little bit in terms of trying to make certain that their timing of events was, in fact, consistent with ours and ours was based on a good bit of data.

MR. WALTERS: You mentioned that they made more than one video template or did you just do the one?

CIA ANALYST #1: When you say "video template" --

MR. WALTERS: I was going to ask exactly what a video template was.

CIA ANALYST #1: The still images that you see behind the animation. In other words --

MR. WALTERS: The houses?

CIA ANALYST #1: The houses. That's a single image on which we superimpose an animation. There's a second case where there's a single image just looking out over the ocean. This is for the eyewitness who described the fireball descending to the surface and then an immediate loud explosion. We went to right where that eyewitness was standing on a
1 porch, set the camera up and took that still image to
2 be able to use it in the video because we wanted as
3 closely as possible to provide reality as a backdrop
4 for this.

5 Now, unfortunately, as you're aware, a lot
6 of people also assume that we have precise knowledge
7 of exactly how the plane came apart as we made this
8 video. Of course we do not have that. We did our
9 best to animate things in the video to illustrate key
10 events that were important to understand what the
11 eyewitnesses had seen.

12 MR. WALTERS: Okay. So the video templates
13 that you used, that you did are all represented
14 here? Or were there some that you did that didn't
15 make the final edit, say?

16 CIA ANALYST #1: We didn't make any
17 templates to use as a backdrop that we didn't use
18 because we already knew when we went out on our trip
19 to Calverton to get those images, we knew what --

20 MR. WALTERS: What you wanted to --
21 CIA ANALYST #1: -- what the video was
22 going to look like.
MR. WALTERS: Gotcha.

MR. YOUNG: CIA Analyst #1, who made the determination? I assume it was the FBI, but maybe my assumption is incorrect. But who determined when and how many of the witness statements you got? Was it the FBI alone?

CIA ANALYST #1: The FBI provided us eyewitness statements over a period of time. Primarily, they were providing us witness statements that would be descriptions that may be consistent with this being a missile, because that's what they wanted us to be looking at. We made the case that it's very important to have all the eyewitness reports possible so that we could go about doing a full analysis. And the example that I used earlier I'll use again: some very important eyewitnesses clearly did not see anything that would be construed as being a missile, but they helped us make a case that none of these eyewitnesses saw a missile.

MR. YOUNG: But then --

DD/CIA/OTI: It's the FBI that gave us the statements.
MR. YOUNG: FBI was the actual.  
DD/CIA/OTI: We dealt with the FBI.  
MR. YOUNG: And did they ever tell you what -- I know they were looking specifically at a missile. Did they ever determine what determining factor -- was it more detail, less detail, or one was here? Was there any sort of distribution that they worried about or anything like that?  
CIA ANALYST #1: No, there was not.  
MR. YOUNG: I'll ask one question and it's only an opinion from you. I take it that it's been said that you cooperated with the board and the FBI and that you had access to the basically all the same information and the two videos are somewhat different. And I'm asking you for an opinion on that, I guess.  
MR. MAYER: Can you provide some specific examples or instances?  
MR. YOUNG: Well, your video shows about a 3000-foot ascent and the other video is about half of that or less.  
CIA ANALYST #1: A lot of people talk about
that as a difference between our analyses. I have to
tell you when we saw how similar our results were --
the fact that we did these animations independent of
each other -- we were very pleased. Both had the
aircraft ascending to some degree. I think the NTSB
had the plane turning to the left a little bit, which
is one of the reasons why it didn't ascend as high as
our model did.

The bottom line here is we were content
with the way -- with the similarities between the two
animations. We also went back and looked at what the
key eyewitness would have seen with the two
animations. And because the NTSB's model has the
plane turning to the left, that compensates... it
doesn't have to go as high in the sky to create the
same --

MR. LOEB: Timing.

CIA ANALYST #1: -- illusion to the
eyewitness.

So what the eyewitness would have seen as
far as the two animations go is very, very close to
the same even though the two models have the plane
going at slightly different altitudes. I know -- I
guess I'll say this again, and you folks have gone
back to it several times -- there's a lot of concern
about what happened to that plane in the first few
seconds after the initial explosion. What happened
to the plane in the first few seconds after the
initial explosion has very little to do with
explaining the vast majority of the eyewitness
statements.

MR. YOUNG: And to echo what Jim says, of
course, your problem is going to be is that we have
seen a few more than you have and we do have to look
at some of the -- and some of the witnesses seem to
be very precise about a white light ascending from a
surface towards -- and that's why we keep bringing up
this question because it's going to be a question we
have to answer.

CIA ANALYST #1: We had eyewitnesses in our
group that said the same thing. Again, I would
suggest if you can, as you're trying to interpret
your 755 eyewitness reports, to try to get
references, things that you can use to peg what part
of this the witnesses see. It's very important.

MR. RODRIGUES: And you're right. And I think what we're trying to do is try and understand that part of it where this is probably what started everything was people saying a streak of light going up. And so that's what we're trying to understand.

And the witnesses we used, I guess you used one or two witnesses, the one on the bridge as a prime, but the question in our minds is what are the rest of the people seeing, if it's a later event like you're saying. I mean, what are they physically seeing ascending?

CIA ANALYST #1: Right.

MR. RODRIGUES: Do you have a thought on that?

CIA ANALYST #1: It's not important what our opinion would be on that. We've speculated about that sort of thing among ourselves. It's not important in terms of interpreting whether or not a missile was involved. It's fire. It's probably burning fuel.

MR. RODRIGUES: That's what we're trying to
understand. Setting a missile aside.

MR. LOEB: Again, I think you're asking them something that they haven't done, they haven't -- worked on. They cannot answer the questions. I think CIA Analyst #1 was very clear about that earlier. And so I think that's left for us -- in the end, that's going to be something the Board has to grapple with, Dennis, in its own analysis. So.

MR. RODRIGUES: The reason I raise it is because when this was done, I figured maybe that came up as an obvious question. And if it was pursued.

MR. LOEB: I think he's answered -- I think he's answered that and I don't know that they need to --

CIA ANALYST #1: If an eyewitness describes a streak of light that culminates in an explosion and then immediately you have two fireballs drop to the surface, we're confident that that streak of light was the burning airplane. Now, your question is why did some eyewitnesses describe that streak of light as something that ascends right off the ocean's
surface. We don't know why they described it that way. We are confident what they are seeing is the burning aircraft and only the burning aircraft. And when I say "burning aircraft," I include fuel trailing from the -- what you see is burning fuel, not the plane burning itself.

MR. WALTERS: At the risk of asking you a really stupid question which we all know the answers to, I need to ask it anyway, and that is because of the organization that you're affiliated with. Could there have been or would there have been any assets used that we would not be aware of that in some way that you could tell us were used that we don't need to know about?

CIA ANALYST #1: The closest...

MR. CAMPBELL: Assets used in the analysis.

MR. WALTERS: In developing the video.

I'll keep it pretty tight there.

CIA ANALYST #1: ... there is, and it's referred to in the video, is the satellite which detected infrared data -- heat from this disaster.

We used that information. It was peripheral to the
work that we did. The fact that that happened is not
classified. I couldn't go into the details of how
that particular collector works.

MR. WALTERS: I don't even want to know.

CIA ANALYST #1: You wouldn't need to know,
it wouldn't affect your -- I don't think it would
affect your --

DD/CIA/OTI: But the answer to the question
is everything that we -- you've got everything we
have. There's nothing else out there, you know, some
super secret sensor or something?

MR. WALTERS: I wouldn't have expected a
different answer.

CIA ANALYST #1: And apparently you have
about 500 witness reports that we don't have.

MR. WALTERS: I can't leave the room
without asking the question.

DD/CIA/OTI: We understand.

MR. YOUNG: CIA Analyst #1, could I ask a
hypothetical question.

CIA ANALYST #1: Sure.

MR. YOUNG: Should an overhead image or
system been available to see that, I'm just curious, do you think it would have detected any?

MR. LOEB: If you can't comment, don't comment.

CIA ANALYST #1: It's "no comment" to that. I'll give you a sense for how some of the work we do is misinterpreted. You may be aware of a Newsweek article that came out after the FBI closed the criminal investigation and released this tape to the public. There's a news writer that assumed that those images, the animated images that you saw in that video, were obtained from a satellite.

MR. YOUNG: I wouldn't have expected -- I would have expected it would have been much better than that.

CIA ANALYST #1: Didn't happen.

MR. WALTERS: Did any other agency like ATF have any input into this video?

CIA ANALYST #1: No, our only sources of information for this video was information that we obtained from the FBI. It was either FBI information, the 302 reports, or information they had
obtained from the NTSB.

DD/CIA/OTI: Information that was given to us.

MR. WALTERS: There was, again -- well, that would have been FBI interviews. There were at least two gentleman there that were working with the FBI and a Missile and Space Intelligence Center analyst and I assume that any work he did, those witness statements were all included as part of the 302s then.

CIA ANALYST #1: I'm sorry. Could you repeat that question, please?

MR. WALTERS: There were two gentlemen that were involved in some of the questioning of certain witnesses, at least one of whom was attached to the missile --

CIA ANALYST #1: Missile and Space Intelligence Center.

MR. WALTERS: That's the guy a Missile and Space Intelligence Center analyst, and I'm just curious if that was a separate interview process or was that done as part of the 302s, and is that how we
have access to that information?

CIA ANALYST #1: The 302s provided to us very often would give a list of names of people that participated in the interviews. These would include the special agents and in several instances, the representatives from the Missile and Space Intelligence Center by name. They would be in the room together as they interviewed eyewitnesses.

MR. MAYER: Did the work of the Missile and Space Intelligence Center, separate from the FBI, produce any information that you got that was used in your work I think is the question that Jim's trying to ask.

CIA ANALYST #1: No, it did not.

MR. MAYER: Your input for this analysis came from the FBI witness files.

CIA ANALYST #1: Right. My counsel has given me permission to speculate a little bit on what eyewitnesses who describe something in the sky ascending may have seen, even though we think that what they are seeing at the time is something that is descending. I don't have this on a Vugraph. What I
have here is a photograph of several fireworks that were fired from behind the governor's mansion in Williamsburg. And if you look at this picture, and if I tell you those are fireworks, you would think it reasonable that the firework starts here right above the roof of the governor's mansion and ascends into the sky. It's going up. If I told you, it looks like a firework but it's not a firework, what you're seeing here is a meteor going through the sky approaching you from a distance and getting closer and closer to you and appearing to rise in the sky, even though we know that meteor is descending in altitude, you also get an image that would look like this.

I think what may have happened is some eyewitnesses are seeing something move through the sky and their brain is thinking, "I'm looking at a firework. The firework came from the surface." And as soon as they register it that way, they start to interpret what they're seeing from that point on.

It's important to realize that these eyewitnesses are, in general, 10 or more miles away from what's
happening. At 10 or more miles away, your eyesight
doesn't give you an ability to perceive depth.
You're seeing a two-dimensional image in the sky.
And you're inferring depth from experience. Now
that's speculation. It doesn't affect -- if what I
just told you turned out not to be what those
eyewitnesses saw, it would not at all affect our
conclusion that they're seeing only the latter stages
of the disaster.

MR. YOUNG: CIA Analyst #1, without getting
into anything classified, again, should someone have
seen, not necessarily here, but should someone see a
launch from the surface into the sky of a device such
as some people speculate, what differences would you
think they would have seen? In other words, if it
was a Stinger or something like that, would there
have been specific differences that you can call out
based on what they saw?

MR. CAMPBELL: That's -- again, that's
another question if you guys worked on, that would be
one thing. Otherwise I think we would want to
qualify an expert on that.
CIA ANALYST #1: I can say this, because it was something we looked at. Like I say, when we started this analysis we didn't start it with any preconceived notions about what the eyewitnesses had seen. We understood that if the eyewitnesses had seen a missile attack the plane, because they're seeing this from a lot of different locations, it's going to look different to each of them. And we were hoping that if indeed it turned out that they were witnessing a missile attack, we would be able to use their descriptions to determine the location from where that missile was launched.

When you go through and proceed with that analysis, you arrive at the conclusion that what they're seeing is only the plane.

I think you will find this as you look at your 755 eyewitness reports. Even though you've got a lot of people that are describing something ascend up vertically, as an example, a lot of eyewitnesses think that this is a lot closer to them than we know it is. And by "a lot closer to them" I mean the fireball itself. The eyewitness on the bridge, he
1 thinks that the firework that he is seeing originates on the beach. The beach is about a quarter mile from where he is standing. He thinks the fireball that he sees in the sky is a half mile from where he stands. So another quarter mile out off the shore. In reality, it's 11 miles away.

This happens again and again. What it brings home to me is that there was a tremendous amount of fuel in the sky. It was unfathomable to a lot of people that this could be 10 miles away. It's so big that I think they interpreted it as being much closer than it really was.

MR. YOUNG: Okay.

MR. WALTERS: You said that you had pretty much reached your conclusions by early February; is that correct?

CIA ANALYST #1: The conclusion that the eyewitnesses were only seeing the burning aircraft was made at 10:00 p.m. at night on the 30th of December 1996.

MR. WALTERS: Was it really?

CIA ANALYST #1: Yes, as I was sitting
behind the computer. It's -- up until then, what we're doing is trying to interpret these reports the way you are now. If it's a streak, where is the streak originating from? What external source could there be for the streak? There was a realization, having all the data laid out, that you can explain what the eyewitnesses are seeing with only the burning aircraft.

MR. WALTERS: So it was March then before the FBI or until you briefed --

CIA ANALYST #1: CIA Analyst #2 said something which is a good point. CIA Analyst #2 said there are other issues. Once you think you have an answer you have a lot of eyewitness reports. You have to go back through all of them. What we ended up doing then was placing very carefully all the eyewitness reports we were getting, and were continuing to get, on the mapping software.

Also, I immediately alerted, I called -- the next morning I called the special agents I worked with at the FBI and explained what we were thinking. Because I wanted to make sure that -- even though at
that point it's a conclusion, we don't have it fully
documented. We wanted them to be aware of this so
that they could start proceeding with the
investigation and having that initial piece of
information.

MR. WALTERS: A personal note, has nothing
to do with anything else. It's a little annoying
that it took them a year to decide to go along with
your program.

MR. YOUNG: CIA Analyst #1, is this the
only time you've ever been asked to perform this sort
of analysis on a civilian type thing like this? In
other words, did you do something on the Challenger,
for instance?

CIA ANALYST #1: No. I've got about 27
years experience doing analysis on problems, believe
it or not, that we would often consider more
challenging than this in the sense that we have less
data to work with, and less ability to corroborate
our theories.

The nice thing about this as a technical
problem is that you have lots of checks and
balances. You have radar data, you have
eyewitnesses. Lots of eyewitnesses. You've got
something we didn't get into in this discussion so
far but remember you have an eyewitness on a plane,
on a USAir flight who describes seeing an airplane
fly below him about 10 seconds before he sees this
light appear in the sky. Now you can go back and use
the radar data and indeed there is a plane that flies
below him.

And 10 seconds after... 12 seconds after
that happens, Flight 000 explodes. And it explodes
in a part of the sky where he says he sees this white
light appear. So now you have an independent
corroborations with the guy on the bridge. I think
this gentleman upon USAir Flight 217 is another
excellent eyewitness in that he saw things happen
near the very beginning.

MR. YOUNG: Actually, we had two witnesses
on that airplane.

CIA ANALYST #1: That's correct.

MR. YOUNG: But curiously you mention the
airplane. Do you know what airplane he saw pass
CIA ANALYST #1: We think it's a P-3 and we think the P-3 was at an altitude of about 20,000 feet and the USAir was at an altitude of 21,700 feet. And you're correct, he was sitting in seat 5-F on the right-hand side of the plane and behind him was another eyewitness, in seat 6-F.

MR. MAYER: Not that you have a clear memory of --

CIA ANALYST #1: It's been a year ago, I'm sorry.

MR. YOUNG: You didn't review any of this before you came.

CIA ANALYST #1: Some of these -- as you're very aware, after you spend a long time -- we spent a year looking at these. I suspect 20 years from now I'm going to remember some of those details, as you will.

MR. YOUNG: I'd just like to say on behalf of my company, I appreciate very much that you've even taken the time to talk to us. I know most people think that I'll disappear now.
MR. LOEB: That's part of the package, Rob.

CIA ANALYST #1: You're most welcome. We appreciate the opportunity.

MR. WALTERS: I'd like to thank Bcrnic for making it work, too. I know this could not have been easy to make all this happen between the organizations.

MR. LOEB: Actually, the thanks belong to David and also to Peter.

(Whereupon, at 12:00 p.m., the briefing was concluded.)