

DOCKET NO. SA-516

APPENDIX Z

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC**

**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT
CAPT. DAVID McCLAIN
MARCH 25, 1999
(79 pages)**

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REGARDING THE NATIONAL
TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD'S
INVESTIGATION OF THE ACCIDENT
INVOLVING TWA FLIGHT 800.
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10:04 A.M.
March 25, 1999
Charlotte, North Carolina

INTERVIEW

OF

CAPTAIN DAVID MCCLAINE

ORIGINAL



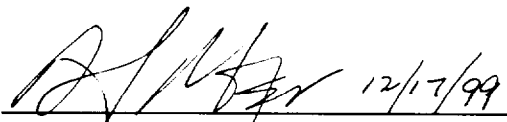
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During the March 25, 1999, interview, Captain McClaine provided a one-page statement to the group that he prepared on July 17, 1996. That statement appears on the next page.

Safety Board staff who were present during the interview of Captain McClaine carefully reviewed this transcript and noted the following errors:

Page	Line	Correction
4	22	"safe" should read "safety"
5	5	"area" should read "here"
5	22	"report" should read "reporter"
6	20	"operation" should read "operations"
8	10	delete "are"
8	11	delete "over"
9	16	"stigmatism" should read "astigmatism"
11	1	"talk" should read "ask"
11	2	"to" should read "you"
11	5	"down" should read "in"
12	22	"204" should read "240"
15	15	"round" should read "ground"
22	1	"were" should read "had"
22	4	"jest" should read "just"
24	21	"of" should read "over"
29	10	delete "up"
57	11	"aircrafts" should read "aircraft"
57	12	"was" should read "were"
57	12	"aircrafts" should read "aircraft"
57	16	"radio" should read "radial"
57	17	"radio" should read "radial"
65	24	"radio" should read "radial"
65	25	"radio" should read "radial"
66	18	"radio" should read "radial"
66	22	"radio" should read "radial"
67	13	"radio" should read "radial"
67	15	"aircrafts" should read "aircraft"
68	5	"radio" should read "radial"
68	12	"round" should read "ground to"
70	17	"claim" should read "flame"
74	18	"just trail" should read "just left a trail"


David L. Mayer
Witness Group Chairman

TWA 800 Explosion Report

Flt. No. BBE 507	07/17/96	Eastwind Airlines	Destination: KTTN
B-737-200	N221US	O/O Time: 1951/2010L	O/I time:2101/2103L
Capt: D. McClaine #203	F/O: V. Fuschetti 215	Domicile: GSO	
Occurrence Location: Hampton 236 Radial 20 DME	Occurrence Time: About 2030 Local	Wx Conditions: High Cirrus Clouds, Dusk, 40 vis.	

Report: Flying over the Sandy Point VOR we asked for the 247 Radial off Sandy Point to intercept the Hampton 236 Radial (V-139), and were denied because of traffic. So we proceeded to Hampton as we were filed and on the way were told to descend from FL 240 to FL 200. Just prior to the descent; I spotted TWA 800 which appeared to have either one landing light ON, or two very close together ON. It was a very bright light and was moving somewhat toward us, but still crossing our path from right to left. The light was a little off color for a landing light so at first I thought it might be a fire, but didn't see any smoke trail which should have still been visible at the time if there were one. So I passed it off as a landing light from a very large aircraft such as a B-747 which appeared to be just out of JFK. It was definitely the brightest light in the sky.

Just as we were about to level off at FL200 we were told to descend to 16,000 MSL with a good rate through FL180. Passing through FL 180 we turned over Hampton to intercept the 236 Radial. Passing 17,000 feet I flicked ON my left inboard landing light to signal the other aircraft, (TWA 800) that I had him in sight. The aircraft appeared then to be slightly left of our 12:00 position (about on the Hampton 236 Radial) and at about 15,000-13,000 feet MSL at about 15-19 DME. As I flicked on the light the other aircraft exploded into a very large ball of flames. Almost immediately two flaming objects, with flames trailing about 4000 feet behind them, fell out of the bottom of the ball of flame. It was too dark to identify any objects or see any debris. (I thought the objects to be the wings, which were full of fuel.)

I immediately called BOS ATC and reported an inflight explosion out over the water, I stated this twice but didn't get an immediate reply. ATC then issued a couple of instructions to at least two other aircraft, routine messages. Then another aircraft; Lufthansa, I think, reported that there was indeed an inflight explosion and gave a position report off JFK. I then came back and stated that the explosion and column of smoke was on the Hampton 236 Radial at 20 DME; which at this time was right where we were. The smoke column was just to our left side. Another couple of aircraft came up and also reported seeing fire falling into the sea. ATC then started a short roll call. My First Officer then said to me that he thought it was TWA 800. ATC called TWA 800 a couple of times with no reply. I then said to ATC, "I think that's them." He replied, "I think you're right." I then said, "God Bless them."

F/O Fuschetti and I then quickly discussed orbiting the sight or whatever action we could take. Since ATC made no request we decided to continue on to Trenton because of the darkness below, passengers on board and our fuel state. We were then handed off to New York ATC and told to descend to 12,000 feet with following descents to 4000 feet. During the descent to 4000 feet a Navy plane called New York for vectors to the scene so he could help out. We told him it was on the Hampton 236 radial at 20DME and offered our help to New York. We were then switched over to McGuire ATC for our approach into Trenton. The rest of the evening went uneventful. I did call Eastwind Dispatch at Trenton to report the explosion and at Greensboro once more called and spoke to the Dispatcher and the Director of Operations for Eastwind Airlines.

Prior to the explosion I did not see any missile, air to air or ground to air, as I have seen in the press. I did mention this to my F/O just after the explosion. I still think it was a landing light I saw that was ON the other the aircraft,(TWA 800) but can't rule out that it may have been an engine or wing fire due to the color of the light and its brightness. I'm not that familiar with a B-747 landing lights.

1 APPEARANCES:
2 For the National Transportation
3 Safety Board: Mr. David C. Mayer
4 Mr. Douglas P. Brazy
5 For the Federal Aviation
6 Administration: Mr. Joseph F. Manno
7 For the Airline
8 Pilots Association: Capt. James M. Walters
9 For TWA: Mr. Robert Young
10 For Boeing Air Safety: Mr. J. Dennis Rodrigues
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1 This is an interview of David McClaine,
 2 being conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board
 3 before Christine Elminowski, Notary Public, in the Citadel
 4 Room at the Hyatt at South Park, 5501 Carnegie Boulevard,
 5 Charlotte, North Carolina on the 25th day of March, 1999,
 6 beginning at 10:04 A.M.

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1 MR. MAYER: Good morning. We all just
2 introduced ourselves, but perhaps we'll do that again
3 for the benefit of the record. I'm David Mayer, I'm
4 with the National Transportation Safety Board. Would
5 you tell us your name.

6 CAPT. McCLAIN: David McClaine.

7 MR. MAYER: Could you spell your last
8 name.

9 CAPT. McCLAIN: M-c-C-l-a-i-n-e.

10 MR. MAYER: Thanks.

11 CAPT. McCLAIN: Formerly with Eastwind
12 Airlines.

13 MR. BRAZY: My name's Doug Brazy,
14 B-r-a-z-y, with the National Transportation Safety
15 Board.

16 MR. RODRIGUES: Dennis Rodrigues, Boeing
17 Air Safety.

18 MR. WALTERS: James Walters, Airline
19 Pilots Association.

20 MR. MANNO: Joseph Manno, FAA.

21 MR. YOUNG: Bob Young, I'm the director of
22 flight safe at TWA.

23 MR. MAYER: Thank you all very much. We
24 thank you very much for coming to meet with us this
25 morning.

1 CAPT. McCLAINE: I'm happy to be here.
2 Hopefully get the ball rolling and be whatever help I
3 can.

4 MR. MAYER: Great. We recognize that
5 we're all area investigating something that took place
6 about two and a half years ago, but regardless of the
7 time delay I want you to know that your appearance here
8 before us is most appreciated and your statement to us
9 is important to us. Our procedure here is rather
10 informal, but I'd like to make it as orderly as we can
11 just to benefit our reporter. And in doing that, we
12 should try to attempt to avoid as much as we can
13 interrupting each other. What we'll do is I'll ask you
14 a variety of questions and give you an opportunity to
15 answer them and when I've finally exhausted my list
16 we'll start to go around the room and see if anyone else
17 has any questions for you. Eventually, as I mentioned
18 before, a transcript will be produced from our meeting
19 today and that transcript will be placed into the Safety
20 Board's public docket on this case.

21 CAPT. McCLAINE: Okay.

22 MR. MAYER: Also to benefit our report it
23 would be a good idea if all of your answers to the
24 questions are verbal answers made out loud. If any of
25 us, especially me, asks you a question that isn't clear

1 or you don't understand, I'd sure appreciate it if you
2 would ask for clarification. Don't try to answer a
3 question that you don't understand.

4 CAPT. McCLAINE: All right.

5 MR. MAYER: Just advise us if you need us
6 to rephrase or reask a question. If you remember
7 anything during the course of our meeting this morning
8 and you want to revise a question that you answered
9 earlier, just let us know and that's no problem. And I
10 guess the main thing that I want to ask you is to give
11 us your very best recollection of the events that you're
12 going to talk to us about today. And we recognize that,
13 like I said before, it's been two and a half years. And
14 we hope that you'll be able to answer our questions, but
15 I want to let you know that an answer of I don't
16 remember or I just didn't notice is perfectly
17 acceptable. Please don't try to force an answer if you
18 really just don't remember.

19 CAPT. McCLAINE: I brought along an
20 incident report that I gave to my director of operation
21 with Eastwind Airlines. I don't know if you have a copy
22 of that at all or not.

23 MR. MAYER: No, I don't.

24 CAPT. McCLAINE: If I might refer to it to
25 help my own memory.

1 MR. MAYER: You're quite welcome.

2 CAPT. McCLAIN: But if you would like to
3 make a copy of that I have no objection.

4 MR. MAYER: I'd like to make a copy of
5 that for our record.

6 CAPT. McCLAIN: I did this the night -- I
7 don't know, the flight ended, when I got back to
8 Greensboro, after I talked to my director of operations,
9 I was then off duty. Then drove home, I took about an
10 hour and 20 minutes and wrote this up. I probably
11 finished this about midnight or so.

12 MR. MAYER: Great. We really appreciate
13 that. At any time just let us know if you need to take
14 a break and we'll be happy to go off the record and take
15 a break. I'd like to start off and just ask you if you
16 would just to generally characterize your experience in
17 aviation. Just answer how many flight hours do you have
18 and what sort of experience.

19 CAPT. McCLAIN: Well, I'm just under
20 10,000 hours now, I'm sort of keeping track of that. I
21 started out in '66, graduated in December of '69, got my
22 B.S. in aeronautical science, and then I joined the Navy
23 and started all over again and went to jet flight
24 training at that time. It was a little bit different
25 than it is now. And got back, became an instructor, got

1 my wings in March of '72. Did that for about two and a
2 half years, and then of course Vietnam ended and then I
3 was a reserve officer and I got a desk job as a C1 over
4 in Puerto Rico for the last year and a half, and got out
5 of the Navy in '76. And then I used my VA benefits
6 after that to get my ATP, my flight instructor license
7 and my flight engineer, and I had a Boeing 727 out of
8 Brantiff Systems. And after I did that I got a job with
9 an oil company out in Saudi Arabia, and that was in '80,
10 and I worked there for the next nine years flying
11 over the Gulf Stream. Resigned there as an F-27
12 captain, and then that's when I got my job with
13 U.S. Airways, or U.S. Air at the time, and I was put in
14 the F-28 as a first officer. I did that for about 21
15 and a half months before I got furloughed, and then
16 later on I was a Captain of a Navahoe for Dallas Express
17 Airlines for about six months, then that company
18 folded. A few months after that I got the job with
19 Eastwind Airlines and was a captain of the Boeing 737
20 for almost three years before I resigned that and got
21 recalled back to U.S. Airways, where I'm now a Boeing
22 737 first officer on the advanced model.

23 MR. MAYER: Thank you very much. I assume
24 that you hold a Class I Medical Certificate?

25 CAPT. MCCLAINE: Yes.

1 MR. MAYER: Do you have any restrictions
2 on that certificate?

3 CAPT. McCLAIN: No. Well, it's advised
4 that I wear glasses for reading.

5 MR. MAYER: For reading only?

6 CAPT. McCLAIN: Or for near vision. Let
7 me pull it out to make sure. Let's see. It says holder
8 should possess corrective lenses for near vision.

9 MR. MAYER: And do you know what your
10 vision is?

11 CAPT. McCLAIN: I think it's -- no, I'm
12 not sure. I think it's 20/130 or something. I don't
13 know. I really don't know.

14 MR. MAYER: That's fine. Do you have any
15 color blindness?

16 CAPT. McCLAIN: No. No stigmatism, color
17 blindness. My distance vision is excellent.

18 MR. MAYER: No history of any eye disease
19 or anything?

20 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

21 MR. MAYER: And let's see, I believe you
22 just told us that in July of 1996 you were employed by
23 Eastwind Airlines?

24 CAPT. McCLAIN: That's correct.

25 MR. MAYER: And of course we're here today

1 to talk about the accident involving Transworld Airlines
2 Flight 800 that occurred on July 17th, crashed in the
3 ocean just south of Long Island. And I understand that
4 you were operating a 737 in the area around that time?

5 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes. At the time of the
6 explosion I just passed the Hampton VOR. I was still in
7 a descent, just about leveling off, I think it was at
8 16,000 feet.

9 MR. MAYER: Can you recall the call sign,
10 flight number?

11 CAPT. McCLAINE: I was Stinger Bee 507.

12 MR. MAYER: And --

13 CAPT. McCLAINE: That's the Eastwind call
14 sign, Stinger Bee, or was. It was, it's now Stinger.

15 MR. MAYER: And you were the captain of
16 that flight; is that correct?

17 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes, I was.

18 MR. MAYER: And you had a first officer on
19 board with you. Was anyone else in the --

20 CAPT. McCLAINE: No, it was just -- First
21 Officer Vincent Fuschetti was in the right seat and
22 myself was in the left seat, we were the only two in the
23 cockpit.

24 MR. MAYER: No observers?

25 CAPT. McCLAINE: No.

1 MR. MAYER: And I wonder if I could talk
2 to about the visibility that evening, if you can
3 remember any details.

4 CAPT. McCLAINE: It was excellent. I put
5 down my report about 40 miles, but it was probably
6 greater than that. You could see a long, long ways,
7 especially it was at dusk. You could see lights in the
8 ground for a long, long ways. I probably -- I was
9 picking up New York and everything when I was over the
10 Sandy Point VOR. And just after that is where I
11 actually picked up TWA 800 lifting off out of JFK, and
12 of course at that time I didn't know it was TWA 800.
13 But it had a real bright light on its left side and I
14 thought it was a little bit off color. I started coming
15 out and turning a little bit going towards its track and
16 I figured it was a heavy going on a North Atlantic
17 route.

18 MR. MAYER: I wonder if I could interrupt
19 you. I'll give you plenty of time, I just want to
20 finish some of the visibility just a little bit and then
21 I'll allow you all the time.

22 CAPT. McCLAINE: It was excellent.

23 MR. MAYER: When you said you were over
24 the Sandy Point VOR, were you saying that you could pick
25 up the lights of New York City?

1 CAPT. McCLAIN: Oh, yes, and further
2 south.

3 MR. MAYER: And further south?

4 CAPT. McCLAIN: Oh, yeah.

5 MR. MAYER: Were there any clouds, did you
6 notice any clouds?

7 CAPT. McCLAIN: There was some real high
8 cirrus at the time. Yeah, I put real high cirrus, above
9 us where we were. We were flying at 24,000 feet in our
10 route before we started descent and the clouds were
11 above us, so --

12 MR. MAYER: Okay. Thank you. I
13 appreciate that. And which of you was the flying
14 pilot?

15 CAPT. McCLAIN: I was.

16 MR. MAYER: You were the flying pilot.
17 And I believe you had started to tell us then about the
18 position of your aircraft and you were descending I
19 believe you said.

20 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yes. We were given a
21 couple of descents. First we were cleared for 24 --
22 flight level 204 down to flight level 200, and then we
23 were told to continue the descent as we were approaching
24 the Hampton VOR down to 16,000 feet with a good rate
25 through 18. And they asked us I believe if it was a

1 problem doing that, we said no, and so we continued our
2 descent. And I was still watching TWA 800 off and on,
3 and I said previously that it was sort of off color,
4 like a yellowish tint to it. So at first I thought
5 maybe possibly might be a fire on board. And I saw no
6 smoke trail or anything and so I sort of ruled that out,
7 and plus through the length of time. I said if there
8 would have been a fire somebody would have known, would
9 have said something on board the airplane, so I ruled
10 that out. I thought it was a just slightly off-color
11 landing light, but it was really, really bright. It
12 would have been either one light or two really close
13 together from the distance, the angle like that. I
14 thought it was probably a landing light and a turn off
15 light. And it was really bright, so I was following
16 him, I was interested. Plus then we were told on our
17 descent to level out at 16,000 because there was
18 crossing traffic and this other airplane was told that
19 there was crossing traffic. And he was just coming
20 about like this, just from right to left right in front
21 us, he was about at our 12:30 and I went to hit my
22 left --

23 MR. MAYER: Excuse me for interrupting you
24 there. When you said he was at your 12:30, the landing
25 light you were watching?

1 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes. And probably about
2 15, 19 miles I put in the report. I went to flip my
3 landing light on, let him know I saw him, and when I did
4 it it was just like it was connected to the other
5 airplane, it just blew up. I was looking right at him,
6 it was just one big ball of fire. I didn't see anything
7 shooting out at all, except for about 1/100 of a second
8 later two things came out the bottom and went down,
9 probably hit the water within 1/100 of a second of one
10 another. I thought these to be the wings but they
11 trailed flames about 4,000 feet behind them. And
12 those are the only things that came out of that ball of
13 fire. And I didn't see any other previous explosion,
14 I'm not -- I don't rule out that -- the scenarios that
15 I've heard, that could have happened. Because of the
16 angle he was down below me, the fuselage and the wing
17 could have blocked that out, but I didn't see anything
18 coming out that airplane from any angle that I could
19 see. So I immediately thought it was -- and like I
20 called ATC right away, I said in-flight explosion. I
21 thought it was a bomb or in-flight explosion of some
22 sort. I didn't see anything coming up or hit it or any
23 outside material or whatever missile or whatever hit
24 it. And at first ATC didn't say anything. And they
25 just did a -- hand off a couple other aircrafts or gave

1 them altitude limits or whatever and then I came back
2 and said there's been an in-flight explosion, pieces are
3 falling into the sea or ocean. And then I think Low
4 Pines or one of them came up and said there was an
5 in-flight explosion, they gave a position off of JFK.
6 And I think ATC came back with I think somebody else
7 reported it. I said, yeah, Stinger Bee 507 in-flight
8 explosion. And by that time we were going right -- we
9 were at the Hampton 236 at 20 miles, it was right
10 there. And you look down below and you could see some
11 fires in the water. Now, my concern -- of course my
12 first thought was am I far enough way, is anything going
13 to hit our aircraft. And I thought well yeah, we are,
14 no problem there. But we were probably doing about a
15 400 knot round speed about that time. And of course the
16 next thought was well is there anything we can do to
17 help. Well, due to our fuel state, it was dark down
18 below, and you really don't want to expose passengers to
19 that, decided to continue on. And later on we did offer
20 our services but the ATC said no, they didn't need us.
21 But I wanted to get a call out as quick as I could in
22 case there were survivors, pick up bodies or whatever,
23 let them know something happened. And that's basically
24 it, I guess.

25 MR. MAYER: I appreciate that. I think

1 what I'd like to do is maybe take you back through that
2 characterization and ask you some questions about what
3 you saw to try to get a little more detail on the
4 record. And I appreciate that.

5 CAPT. McCLAINE: Sure.

6 MR. MAYER: Can you describe the activity
7 on the flight deck before you noticed what you later
8 learned was TWA flight 800?

9 CAPT. McCLAINE: Well, as I said
10 previously, I was flying the airplane. The first
11 officer was -- at that very moment he was doing some
12 paperwork and he looked up -- I mentioned to him
13 previously that, you know, that's a pretty bright
14 landing light. Yeah, he agreed it was and everything.
15 He may have said something like, you know, what do you
16 think it was, and I said I think it's probably a heavy
17 out of JFK probably going the Atlantic route. He sort
18 of continued with his business, and then he said --
19 looked up. I saw it actually explode, he looked up just
20 a fraction of a second later. He just saw the ball of
21 flames there and he said what was that. I said it just
22 exploded. You know, he said should we call someone. I
23 said, Yeah, I'm going to call right now. And of course
24 I made the call. And he said, What do you think that
25 was? . I said it was either a 747 or 767 heavy going

1 over the Atlantic and it just blew up. And I said
2 probably around 250, 300 people probably just lost their
3 lives. He said you think that many? I said well they
4 hold around that many and probably a 747 and so --

5 MR. MAYER: So you were the first of the
6 two of you to see -- to notice the landing light?

7 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes, I was.

8 MR. MAYER: And you called your first
9 officer's attention to it?

10 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes, I did.

11 MR. MAYER: Can you tell me what attracted
12 your attention to the landing light?

13 CAPT. McCLAINE: It was the brightest
14 object in the sky. I thought it was really, really
15 bright. Boy did he have a pair of landing lights. That
16 thing was bright. The others lifting off didn't seem to
17 be quite as bright. And I hadn't paid that much
18 attention usually, but it was such a nice clear night,
19 you could see him for miles and sort of -- I don't know,
20 it just caught my attention, I guess.

21 MR. MAYER: Would you be able to -- well,
22 let me ask you this first.

23 CAPT. McCLAINE: And it was a little off
24 color.

25 MR. MAYER: Did you see one light or more

1 than one light?

2 CAPT. McCLAINE: It was just -- well, it
3 appeared to be just one light, but it was so bright I
4 figured maybe it was the two lights because of the angle
5 or whatever.

6 MR. MAYER: I see.

7 CAPT. McCLAINE: But it appeared to be
8 just one light.

9 MR. MAYER: Throughout the duration of
10 your --

11 CAPT. McCLAINE: Throughout the duration
12 of the whole time.

13 MR. MAYER: And you said it appeared to be
14 off color?

15 CAPT. McCLAINE: Just a little bit of a
16 yellowish tint to it.

17 MR. MAYER: A little bit of a yellowish
18 tint?

19 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yeah. I even asked the
20 first officer, I said do you think maybe like some light
21 bulbs when they start to die out they turn color a
22 little bit, maybe that might be the reason or something
23 like that? He said I don't know.

24 MR. MAYER: Could you see in your
25 wind-screen where you first noticed it, you know, give a

1 clock position or characterize that?

2 CAPT. McCLAINE: Well, we had changed
3 coming out of Hampton. It was a little bit to the
4 left -- of my wind-screen a little bit left and low, and
5 then of course we started descending. And he got up a
6 little higher on it because we were climbing altitude.
7 And then we turned over Hampton, he went a little more
8 to the right, and then when he blew he was just a little
9 bit on the left side, just left of center.

10 MR. MAYER: Left of center of your
11 wind-screen?

12 CAPT. McCLAINE: And below, yeah.

13 MR. MAYER: Left of center of your
14 wind-screen?

15 CAPT. McCLAINE: Uh-huh.

16 MR. MAYER: How long would you say that
17 the light was in view from the time you first noticed it
18 to the time of the explosion?

19 CAPT. McCLAINE: Oh, I had been watching
20 him on and off for over two minutes, minimum, but I
21 probably had seen him for over five minutes because I
22 was -- or even longer, because I was probably about
23 halfway between Sandy Point and Hampton. And so it was
24 probably close to five minutes, I'd say, at least.

25 MR. MAYER: You're estimating that you

1 were --

2 CAPT. McCLAINE: I'm just estimating.

3 MR. MAYER: Yeah, of course. But you're
4 saying that you were about halfway between Sandy Point
5 and Hampton VOR when you first saw him?

6 CAPT. McCLAINE: I'm not sure I could say
7 that's when I first saw him. That's when I started to
8 pay a lot more attention to him.

9 MR. MAYER: I see. When you flipped your
10 landing light to signal the other aircraft, do you have
11 any estimate of the altitude of the other aircraft?

12 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yeah. I put him at about
13 13 to 15,000 feet.

14 MR. MAYER: During the time that you
15 observed the landing light, did you ever see -- well let
16 me ask you this first. About the setting of the sun.
17 Had the sun, do you remember if the sun had set?

18 CAPT. McCLAINE: The sun was off on the
19 west and it was just below the horizon, I believe. It
20 was dusk and it was dark down below, a little bit light
21 on top still.

22 MR. MAYER: Did you see the silhouette of
23 an aircraft?

24 CAPT. McCLAINE: No. Just the light.

25 MR. MAYER: Did you ever see any other

1 lights that might be associated with that aircraft?

2 CAPT. McCLAINE: No.

3 MR. MAYER: Such as a navigational beacon
4 or rotating beacon?

5 CAPT. McCLAINE: No. I can't say that I
6 remember any other lights, no.

7 MR. MAYER: You said there was a time when
8 you started to pay closer attention to this landing
9 light, and from that time until the explosion, did you
10 have continuous sight of the landing light or did you
11 perhaps look away from it?

12 CAPT. McCLAINE: I looked away from it a
13 few times to look at my own instruments. We were in a
14 descent, monitoring my own aircraft, and right back up
15 and there he was. He was, you know, right in front of
16 us the whole time, basically, either left or right of
17 center. But you know, I would say more than 10 or 15
18 seconds at the most I took my eye off it. And the last
19 part there I was looking at him pretty much constantly
20 for about the last minute or so.

21 MR. MAYER: Can you refresh my memory.
22 You were descending to --

23 CAPT. McCLAINE: 16,000 feet we ended up
24 leveling off at.

25 MR. MAYER: And you did level off at 16?

1 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yeah. We were just
2 leveled off when it blew up.

3 MR. MAYER: You indicated with your hand,
4 you had jest leveled off at about 16,000 feet when you
5 flipped on your landing light and then you saw the
6 aircraft explode?

7 CAPT. McCLAINE: We just leveled off and
8 he was told to level off and I went to flip on the
9 landing light. That's about the only time I took my
10 eyes right off him and looked at him again, flicked it,
11 and he blew.

12 MR. MAYER: As you were flipping your
13 landing light, you were looking at -- I'm sorry, as you
14 were flipping your landing light on, you were looking at
15 the light?

16 CAPT. McCLAINE: I was looking right at
17 the light.

18 MR. MAYER: So you saw a landing light
19 transition into an explosion?

20 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yeah. I was trying to --
21 also seeing if he was going to give me any signal. They
22 don't do that too much over here, but in Europe they do
23 flash the landing lights quite a bit.

24 MR. MAYER: I see. When you saw the
25 explosion, do you know if your -- I believe you said

1 your first officer, was his head down or --

2 CAPT. McCLAINE: It was down and it looked
3 up. He was just looking up just a millisecond after it
4 exploded.

5 MR. MAYER: I see. And there was a radio
6 call from your aircraft --

7 CAPT. McCLAINE: Uh-huh.

8 MR. MAYER: -- after the explosion. Was
9 that --

10 CAPT. McCLAINE: That was me.

11 MR. MAYER: -- you who made the radio
12 call? Can you estimate for us the length of time
13 between your flipping on your landing light and your
14 making the radio call announcing the explosion?

15 CAPT. McCLAINE: It's hard to say, but
16 I'd -- probably at least 15 seconds or a little more.
17 Not a lot of time, but it exploded, let's see, then --
18 you know, maybe less than 15 seconds, but say 10
19 seconds, around there.

20 MR. MAYER: Was there some communication
21 between you and your first officer on the flight deck
22 between the time of the explosion and the time --

23 CAPT. McCLAINE: Well he said what was
24 that, I said it was an airplane that just blew up. And
25 do you think we ought to call? And I said, Yeah, I'm

1 doing it right now, so -- not very long.

2 MR. MAYER: But --

3 CAPT. McCLAIN: But then after that we
4 waited a while because there was a lot of radio
5 traffic. And I made a call again and the ATC gave a
6 couple of commands to another aircraft and then somebody
7 else made another call.

8 MR. MAYER: But the length of time between
9 you flipping your landing light and you making your very
10 first radio call to ATC would have been --

11 CAPT. McCLAIN: I'll say ten seconds,
12 about.

13 MR. MAYER: Ten seconds. Okay. I think
14 we've actually made it through my questions on the list
15 here. Do you have --

16 MR. BRAZY: I just wanted to clarify
17 something for my understanding. The bright off-color
18 landing light that you observed, you saw that from the
19 time it departed JFK or pretty close to it?

20 CAPT. McCLAIN: Well, from the time I
21 picked it up. He was out of the water, not very high
22 up, probably a couple thousand feet.

23 MR. BRAZY: You didn't notice it changing
24 brightness or discoloration from the time you first saw
25 it?

1 CAPT. McCLAINE: No, not really. It was
2 pretty constant.

3 MR. BRAZY: I have nothing further.

4 MR. MAYER: Dennis, do you have any of
5 questions?

6 MR. RODRIGUES: Yeah, I've got a number of
7 questions, but I think your statement and answers to
8 your questions may have answered a number of them
9 already, but I'll go through them anyway, just to see
10 what I get here. What was your altitude when you first
11 saw this light on 800?

12 CAPT. McCLAINE: I'm probably going to
13 have to say flight level 240, but I may have started the
14 descent. I would say definitely between 22 and 24,000
15 feet. It was probably closer to 24.

16 MR. RODRIGUES: Okay. And what was your
17 altitude when you saw it explode?

18 CAPT. McCLAINE: About 16,000.

19 MR. RODRIGUES: What do you think 800's
20 altitude was when you first saw it?

21 CAPT. McCLAINE: I said between 16 and
22 17,000 I flicked on the landing light.

23 MR. RODRIGUES: What was 800's altitude
24 when you first -- when you first saw it?

25 CAPT. McCLAINE: Oh, I first saw him I

1 estimate it to be probably around 2,000 feet. He was
2 lifting off out of JFK and going straight over the water
3 and then he started turning northward.

4 MR. RODRIGUES: And what was 800's
5 altitude when it exploded?

6 CAPT. McCLAIN: I estimate between 13 and
7 15,000 feet.

8 MR. RODRIGUES: How far do you feel you
9 were from 800 when you first saw the light, distance?

10 CAPT. McCLAIN: Oh, boy. I don't know,
11 maybe 60 miles.

12 MR. RODRIGUES: How far do you feel you
13 were from 800 when you flashed your landing lights and
14 when it exploded?

15 CAPT. McCLAIN: Fifteen, nineteen miles,
16 maybe.

17 MR. RODRIGUES: During the time that you
18 were descending to 16,000 feet, did you continue to look
19 at the light more or less continuously?

20 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yes, especially when I was
21 told I was conflicting traffic. I thought that that was
22 the traffic we were supposed to be looking at.

23 MR. RODRIGUES: How long do you believe
24 that you looked at 800 between the time you first saw
25 the airplane and the time you saw it explode?

1 CAPT. McCLAIN: Probably around five
2 minutes or something, and more continuously as we got to
3 the end of that.

4 MR. RODRIGUES: Did this landing light or
5 this light or off-color light seem to be in a normal
6 climbing attitude for its location?

7 CAPT. McCLAIN: Uh-huh.

8 MR. RODRIGUES: For a flight out of JFK?

9 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah, normal flight. It
10 wasn't erratic at all, steady.

11 MR. RODRIGUES: For the entire time that
12 you observed it?

13 CAPT. McCLAIN: The entire time, until it
14 disappeared.

15 MR. RODRIGUES: When you followed the
16 off-color light, did that seem to travel along a normal
17 flight path?

18 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yes.

19 MR. RODRIGUES: And if not, you know, what
20 was its path?

21 CAPT. McCLAIN: No, it was totally normal.

22 MR. RODRIGUES: What was the visibility
23 like, you already answered that pretty well. Could you
24 see the horizon clearly?

25 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yes, part of it. Part was

1 lit. We were on the terminator and it was dark and then
 2 you could see the little bit of light on the horizon.
 3 But yes, you could make out the horizon.

4 MR. RODRIGUES: Where was the sun relative
 5 to 800 when you saw it?

6 CAPT. McCLAIN: Well, that was to the
 7 left of us. It was sort of back about 4:00, 3 or 4:00.

8 MR. RODRIGUES: And 800 was?

9 CAPT. McCLAIN: Basically at our 12:00,
 10 and then when it actually exploded though the sun was
 11 probably more towards the 5:00 position.

12 MR. RODRIGUES: When you first saw 800,
 13 was there anything unusual around the airplane in its
 14 flight path, such as smoke, debris, color differences,
 15 anything at all?

16 CAPT. McCLAIN: No, no.

17 MR. RODRIGUES: When you saw 800 prior to
 18 the explosion, could you see if the nose of the airplane
 19 was on the airplane? I mean, was it a complete airplane
 20 you're looking at?

21 CAPT. McCLAIN: As far as I know. I
 22 couldn't see any silhouette or anything. All I saw was
 23 the light.

24 MR. RODRIGUES: All you saw was the light.

25 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah. And so I couldn't

1 really tell.

2 MR. RODRIGUES: Could you describe the
3 explosion in terms of the movement of lighted objects or
4 pieces? In other words, did a burning mass continue
5 along the path of the airplane, did it ascend, did it
6 descend?

7 CAPT. McCLAINE: Well, all I saw was
8 basically a big ball like that, nothing came out of it.
9 And like I said, a fraction of a second later these two
10 streams of fire came out the bottom up and they came out
11 together, at the same -- and hit with almost exactly
12 same time. There wasn't one and then later on another,
13 exact same time. And I didn't see anything other than
14 that come out of that ball of fire.

15 MR. RODRIGUES: Okay. So --

16 CAPT. McCLAINE: It was a nice big round,
17 looked like you see in THE movies, you know, fuel
18 air --

19 MR. RODRIGUES: Explosion?

20 CAPT. McCLAINE: -- explosion. You know,
21 yellowish, orangish explosion and nice big round cloud
22 and (indicating.)

23 MR. RODRIGUES: And the two objects that
24 came out?

25 CAPT. McCLAINE: They were trailing flames

1 behind, about 4,000 feet behind, halfway down the water.

2 MR. RODRIGUES: And they were trailing
3 flames behind but there was no -- was there any light
4 going up from --

5 CAPT. McCLAIN: No, no.

6 MR. RODRIGUES: -- from the ball of
7 fire?

8 CAPT. McCLAIN: No. These things, of
9 course for a while they -- while the wings fell, at
10 least I think they're the wings, actually for about
11 4,000 feet they were still connected to that ball. But
12 of course that ball disappeared fairly quickly too.

13 MR. RODRIGUES: So the explosion was at
14 about 13 to 15,000 feet?

15 CAPT. McCLAIN: Uh-huh.

16 MR. RODRIGUES: And there was no -- was
17 there any flaming object or anything that climbed to
18 your altitude, 16 or more?

19 CAPT. McCLAIN: Not that I could see.

20 MR. RODRIGUES: Did you see any explosion
21 after you saw the first one?

22 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

23 MR. RODRIGUES: Was there any noticeable
24 flight path change before or after --

25 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

1 MR. RODRIGUES: -- the explosion?

2 CAPT. McCLAIN: After the explosion I
3 didn't see any flight path at all, it was just --

4 MR. RODRIGUES: Right. But not before as
5 well?

6 CAPT. McCLAIN: No. Before was nice
7 steady flight.

8 MR. RODRIGUES: Was there any noticeable
9 speed change before --

10 CAPT. McCLAIN: Not that I could --

11 MR. RODRIGUES: -- or after? And was
12 there any noticeable -- and I think you answered this
13 already -- any noticeable climbing angle change --

14 CAPT. McCLAIN: Uh-uh.

15 MR. RODRIGUES: -- before or after?

16 CAPT. McCLAIN: None at all.

17 MR. RODRIGUES: That's all I have for the
18 moment.

19 MR. MAYER: Thank you. I appreciate
20 that.

21 MR. WALTERS: You're going to think we're
22 really stupid here because we're going to ask all the
23 same questions over and over, and I apologize for that.

24 CAPT. McCLAIN: I'm ready for that.

25 MR. WALTERS: I'll try to limit it. You

1 watched the light that you think was 800 all the way out
2 of JFK or --

3 CAPT. McCLAINE: Pretty much.

4 MR. WALTERS: Were there other lights that
5 you were aware of that were obviously departures out of
6 JFK at about the same time?

7 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yeah. I believe there
8 was a couple others that proceeded on, I guess it was
9 also one or two afterwards.

10 MR. WALTERS: Were they in a similar
11 flight path kind of --

12 CAPT. McCLAINE: I believe a couple of
13 them were, but their lights weren't any near as bright
14 as the ones I saw.

15 MR. WALTERS: So even at that time those
16 lights looked a little bit brighter?

17 CAPT. McCLAINE: That's why it drew my
18 attention. It was the brightest thing in the sky.

19 MR. WALTERS: Timing wise you said it was
20 about five minutes. That would have been from the very
21 first time you saw the really bright lights then until
22 the explosion?

23 CAPT. McCLAINE: Uh-huh.

24 MR. WALTERS: Could you describe, maybe a
25 little bit more in detail, if you can, the relative

1 motion for the entire duration of the five minutes of
2 the bright light? You mentioned it was kind of at
3 12:30, but if it started here could you sort of describe
4 in your field of view where it went in that period of
5 time?

6 CAPT. McCLAINE: Where, from the cockpit
7 or from his flight?

8 MR. WALTERS: From your position.
9 Assuming that you're in a nice stable heading and you're
10 not making any turns, did the airplane first appear very
11 close to the area say where JFK is and you followed it?

12 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes.

13 MR. WALTERS: In which case did it go from
14 your right to your left over a long period of time?

15 CAPT. McCLAINE: Well, actually -- well,
16 because we were coming out of Sandy Point it was more or
17 less I guess a little bit to the left and then we --
18 it's hard to say. I don't know. I really wasn't -- for
19 the most of the part of the flight he was on the left --
20 just left of center, and then for a while it went to the
21 right a little bit, but then he came back to the left.

22 MR. WALTERS: But pretty much stayed in
23 the same general spot?

24 CAPT. McCLAINE: He wasn't from one side
25 to the other at all, no. Pretty much in the center.

1 MR. WALTERS: And that obviously then
2 didn't make any severe enough kind of turns or bends
3 that you would pick up on that?

4 CAPT. McCLAINE: No.

5 MR. WALTERS: Did you ever hear anything?

6 CAPT. McCLAINE: I heard a couple of his
7 radio transmissions, that was about it, which also led
8 me to believe everything was normal.

9 MR. WALTERS: But as far as an explosion,
10 you never heard an explosion?

11 CAPT. McCLAINE: No.

12 MR. WALTERS: Did you feel any
13 turbulence?

14 CAPT. McCLAINE: No, I didn't feel any
15 shock wave or anything like that.

16 MR. WALTERS: And at no time -- and I
17 think somebody already asked this, but you never saw an
18 airplane per se, wings and engines and windows?

19 CAPT. McCLAINE: No.

20 MR. WALTERS: No rotating lights, no
21 beacon?

22 CAPT. McCLAINE: I may have, but I don't
23 recall seeing anything at this point.

24 MR. WALTERS: Right. Could you through
25 reference -- and I'm trying to figure out how we could

1 do this, I have a quarter out here. But if I could hold
2 something in front of you at arm's length to give a size
3 of the ball, is there anything, like if you held a
4 quarter out, was it bigger than a quarter say or --

5 MR. MAYER: And you're asking about the
6 explosion?

7 MR. WALTERS: The explosion itself, the
8 ball.

9 CAPT. McCLAINE: Probably about the size
10 of the end of that glass.

11 MR. WALTERS: Held pretty much at arm's
12 length?

13 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes.

14 MR. WALTERS: And what is that, about two
15 and a half to three inches.

16 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yeah.

17 MR. MAYER: You're saying two and a half
18 to three inches in diameter.

19 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes. You know, it didn't
20 fill up the wind-screen or anything like that.

21 MR. WALTERS: Right. I was just trying to
22 get an idea.

23 CAPT. McCLAINE: That would have been way
24 too close.

25 MR. WALTERS: In relation to the horizon

1 then since you were higher, the light was below the
2 horizon at all times pretty much?

3 CAPT. McCLAIN: Right.

4 MR. WALTERS: That's about it I think for
5 me for now.

6 MR. MANNO: Just a couple of
7 clarifications and questions just for the record. I
8 want to make sure it's clear. The bright colored light
9 with the yellowish tint, you did say you never saw the
10 silhouette of the aircraft?

11 CAPT. McCLAIN: I never did see the
12 silhouette.

13 MR. MANNO: So when you're saying the left
14 side, you're talking about left side from your position,
15 you're not saying the left side of the aircraft?

16 CAPT. McCLAIN: Well, the track it was
17 taking it had to be left side of his airplane.

18 MR. MANNO: Okay. You are saying it was
19 the left side of his aircraft?

20 CAPT. McCLAIN: Uh-huh.

21 MR. MAYER: Just to make sure I
22 understand, you're saying that the light you were
23 observing you believe to be a landing light located on
24 the left side of --

25 MR. MANNO: On the left side of his

1 aircraft?

2 CAPT. McCLAINE: Uh-huh.

3 MR. MANNO: And when you were leveling off
4 at 16,000 feet I think I heard you say that you flipped
5 your lights on because you heard ATC give TWA 800 the
6 same instructions to level off?

7 CAPT. McCLAINE: That could be conflicting
8 traffic.

9 MR. MANNO: That's what caused you to flip
10 the light?

11 CAPT. McCLAINE: That was one of the
12 things. I was going to do it anyway, being he was
13 across our path there and he wasn't that far off our
14 altitude.

15 MR. MANNO: But when you heard that
16 transmission, that's what keyed you to flip the light?

17 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes.

18 MR. MANNO: That's it.

19 MR. YOUNG: During the five minutes or so
20 that you observed this light, was there any time that
21 your vision was obscured by either the windshield post
22 or the glare shield, that you can recollect?

23 CAPT. McCLAINE: Not really, I don't
24 think.

25 MR. YOUNG: So pretty much you had a clear

1 view of it all the time?

2 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah.

3 MR. YOUNG: I guess the second question I
4 have is -- you've already answered that you never
5 actually saw the silhouette of the airplane, in other
6 words you couldn't make out the engines or the nose or
7 anything like that?

8 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

9 MR. YOUNG: When it did explode though
10 you've already said it was between 13 and 15,000 feet,
11 and this question has been asked but I'd like to
12 reverify and make sure that I've got it clearly in my
13 head. Since you were at or near 16,000 feet leveling
14 off, should any large piece of this explosion, whatever
15 you saw, have zoomed up above the altitude it was at, do
16 you think you would have seen it with the back light?

17 CAPT. McCLAIN: If it would have been
18 illuminated, you know, had flames on it, yes. But if it
19 was just a piece of metal going up, probably not.

20 MR. YOUNG: Would you have though kind of
21 the light behind you from the setting sun from that
22 standpoint?

23 CAPT. McCLAIN: Unless it reflected that
24 light, no, I wouldn't have seen it.

25 MR. YOUNG: At 15 to 19 miles then, in

1 your recollection, you didn't see any structure or
2 anything else of this thing zoom up 1,000, 1,500, 3,000
3 feet?

4 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

5 MR. YOUNG: So everything, other than the
6 explosion, expansion itself stayed at the altitude that
7 you saw?

8 CAPT. McCLAIN: Uh-huh. As far as I saw.

9 MR. YOUNG: Well, I understand. And
10 again, I want to express our appreciation for you
11 coming, because you are a very key person as far as
12 we're concerned because you're the only person that was
13 looking at it at the time.

14 CAPT. McCLAIN: Well I used to fly on
15 that flight a lot of times 707 over Saudi Arabia so I've
16 got a lot of history with it too.

17 MR. YOUNG: A couple other questions. You
18 were interviewed by the FBI how many times, do you
19 remember?

20 CAPT. McCLAIN: Immediately the next day
21 they called up in the morning and asked to come out, and
22 one agent came out, and she was in our house for
23 approximately about an hour and a half, and out of that
24 probably about an hour that pertained to TWA 800
25 directly. Then later on that night, I guess it was

1 about 10:30 at night an agent called from New York
2 saying that he needed -- he had gone over the copy of
3 the report that the agent that was there that morning
4 had made and he was trying to get a clarification, and I
5 did not -- this light was on the airplane, it wasn't --
6 the light was not traveling towards the airplane like
7 I've seen the backing of a missile or something like
8 that, and I said no it was on the airplane. It wasn't
9 going to it or coming from it, it was right on the
10 airplane. And so we spent about I guess five or ten
11 minutes on the phone, and that was it. And I think
12 maybe about a year later or two years later I got
13 another call from New York I believe it was, and that
14 was just for a couple of minutes and basically asked if
15 I had any change at all or anything. He asked about the
16 light again and that was basically it.

17 MR. YOUNG: I know this is a difficult
18 question, but you wouldn't remember any of the agents'
19 names, per chance, especially the last one that called a
20 year later?

21 CAPT. McCLAINE: No.

22 MR. YOUNG: Let me see, I've got a couple
23 more quick ones and then I'll leave it at that. We are
24 the first time then that you've talked to the NTSB or
25 any of the parties to the investigation?

1 CAPT. McCLAINE: Uh-huh.

2 MR. YOUNG: Were you on auto pilot during
3 your descent?

4 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes.

5 MR. YOUNG: So during the whole time
6 including the level off?

7 CAPT. McCLAINE: It's an SP77 auto pilot.

8 MR. YOUNG: You don't have altitude
9 capture?

10 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes.

11 MR. YOUNG: You would level off by
12 yourself?

13 CAPT. McCLAINE: It would level off by
14 itself.

15 MR. MAYER: Just to make sure the record
16 is clear, you were using autopilot and the autopilot did
17 capture and level off?

18 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes. All I had to do was
19 go down and redial the altitude.

20 MR. YOUNG: One more question real quickly
21 and then I'll pass off. Again I'm going back on my
22 memory and I'm over 50 now unfortunately, but were you
23 interviewed by anyone from the media or did you appear
24 on any media type things discussing 800?

25 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yes. I was at a couple

1 of -- one magazine, a writer, actually two magazine
2 writers, I believe, then I did the video interview for a
3 show that was on the Learning Channel. It was the TWA
4 800 incident, actually the crew came up from Britain for
5 that and I guess did about an hour's worth of taping and
6 used about 30 seconds of it, I guess, or something like
7 that. And then I talked to a couple people offhand
8 about it, other than that. I wouldn't call it an
9 interview or anything. I haven't been trying to -- I
10 gave one -- the first guy who interviewed me up from a
11 newspaper I guess it was, I wasn't familiar with it at
12 all but I agreed to it, it was just over the phone, both
13 of them were over the phone and he did send me a copy of
14 it, I think he misquoted me a little bit on it, I wasn't
15 too happy with that. The next one I did I believe was
16 from LA and I've got his name at home and I don't recall
17 right offhand, but he was pretty accurate. And I also
18 interviewed with one guy, he asked us -- one reporter is
19 a good friend of his, his name was Richard Hirsch and
20 he's on the internet and he's compiled that
21 investigation, I answered a few of his questions via the
22 internet and on the telephone.

23 MR. YOUNG: Unfortunately as you're aware
24 there is some controversial issues about this. Let me
25 ask one last question and then I'll leave you alone.

1 When you saw the explosion obviously you were startled,
2 I would imagine, --

3 CAPT. McCLAINE: Oh, yeah.

4 MR. YOUNG: -- seeing something like
5 that. I'm a Navy guy by the way too. Would you or do
6 you remember being prepared to be able to maneuver your
7 airplane if you had seen any objects come from this
8 explosion that you thought might have, you know, had the
9 opportunity to hit your airplane?

10 CAPT. McCLAINE: It entered my mind, yeah.

11 MR. YOUNG: And as you said before, I
12 believe, and just to clarify, you never saw anything
13 come from the explosion upward that would make you
14 concerned about the possibility of any danger to your
15 airplane at all?

16 CAPT. McCLAINE: No, I didn't. And I was
17 hoping also that the distance between us was enough,
18 which I figured it probably was, although I have heard
19 of pieces going great distances and everything. But I
20 didn't see anything, so held my breath for a couple
21 seconds there and --

22 MR. YOUNG: And as you saw the two objects
23 fall out of the bottom of the fireball, everything else
24 that you saw, and obviously I know you were closing at a
25 very fast speed probably around -- well up until the

1 explosion probably around 6 to 800 knots. But as the
2 two pieces fell out, everything else from the ball
3 appeared to follow downwards?

4 CAPT. McCLAINE: I really didn't see
5 anything else.

6 MR. YOUNG: But the fire itself seemed to
7 proceed downward?

8 CAPT. McCLAINE: Yeah, a little bit. The
9 ball just sort of blew up and it just sort of burned
10 itself out right there and the wings kept going. It was
11 the fire behind the wings that lasted the longest, like
12 I said left a trail at least about 4,000 feet behind the
13 wings. And once they hit the water and then the flames
14 started going down towards the water with it then there
15 was nothing else up above, other than smoke.

16 MR. YOUNG: Could you estimate in time --
17 and this is a tough question and then I will quit. The
18 time you saw the explosion until you passed by the area
19 where this had entered the water, how many minutes or
20 seconds would you say?

21 CAPT. McCLAINE: Oh, boy. This really
22 calls for a --

23 MR. YOUNG: And if you're not comfortable
24 with it, just say I'm really not sure and we'll just
25 leave it at that.

1 CAPT. McCLAINE: I'm not sure, but it
2 wasn't that long, I know that. I think it was probably
3 my third transmission, we were going right by the smoke
4 trail. So it was definitely less than a minute,
5 probably less than half a minute. Around a half minute,
6 but that's just a guess.

7 MR. YOUNG: And I appreciate that. I know
8 that there's a lot going through your mind.

9 CAPT. McCLAINE: Well I said I'm going
10 through it, my tape, on the tape might say I'm going
11 through right now and that would give you an estimate,
12 but --

13 MR. YOUNG: I appreciate it. Thank you.

14 MR. MAYER: I'm going to ask us to take a
15 five-minute break.

16 (WHEREUPON, brief recess was then taken.)

17 MR. MAYER: During the questioning that's
18 taken place when I last spoke to you I made some notes
19 here, and this is going to be a test if I can read my
20 own writing as I ask you a couple follow-up questions.
21 I believe in response to a question that you were asked
22 you said that you saw other aircrafts departing JFK at
23 about the time you saw the aircraft, the landing light
24 that later exploded.

25 CAPT. McCLAINE: Right.

1 MR. MAYER: When you say that you saw
2 other aircrafts, did you see other landing lights?

3 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah, yeah. Yes.

4 MR. MAYER: But not -- did you see say
5 silhouettes of other fuselages or just simply other
6 landing lights?

7 CAPT. McCLAIN: Well, before TWA 800,
8 yes. It was a little lighter out and then as it got
9 darker out they just disappeared.

10 MR. MAYER: A moment ago you were asked to
11 characterize the size of the explosion as it occurred.
12 This may be a little tougher, but I wonder if you could
13 do the same for the landing light prior to the
14 explosion. And I guess some words that I might offer
15 you to describe it, was it a pinpoint of light, was
16 it -- if the words don't help, don't use them, but --

17 CAPT. McCLAIN: About the size of a dime,
18 if you hold it out.

19 MR. MAYER: The landing light that you
20 observed was about the size of a dime?

21 CAPT. McCLAIN: Uh-huh. It's brightness.

22 MR. MAYER: And that's prior to the
23 explosion?

24 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah. Maybe a little bit
25 less than that, but not much.

1 MR. MAYER: Okay. After the explosion --
2 and my questions are really no longer in a logical
3 order. But after the explosion you said you saw two
4 objects fall down to the water, and I believe I've heard
5 you characterize those objects as wings.

6 CAPT. McCLAIN: Like I said, I couldn't
7 see what they were, but to have all that fuel as it was
8 burning, I'd characterize them they had to be the wings
9 or had to have fuel in them. And they were apart so I
10 figured they had to be on either side of the fuselage
11 and characterize that as probably have to be the wings.

12 MR. MAYER: Did you actually see objects
13 or did you see a trail coming from the objects as they
14 were falling?

15 CAPT. McCLAIN: Just saw a trail coming
16 from the objects.

17 MR. MAYER: I see. Did you see those
18 objects hit the water?

19 CAPT. McCLAIN: Not -- no. I can't say
20 that I saw them hit the water. I saw them -- when I
21 flew over it I saw some fires on the water looking down
22 through some smoke, but I can't actually say that I saw
23 them hit the water. I mean, I may have but I don't
24 recall. I do remember the fires being on the water,
25 but --

1 MR. MAYER: Do you know if you lost sight
2 of them at any time say because perhaps they were
3 obscured by -- they left your wind-screen or would you
4 have had a clear line of sight down to the water?

5 CAPT. McCLAINE: I would have had a clear
6 line of sight, as far as I know. I would maybe have had
7 to sit forward a lit bit to see them all the way down.
8 But like I said, if I have to lean forward I guess I
9 didn't have a full sight all the way down to the water,
10 but maybe that's why I didn't see them. I don't recall
11 them hitting the water, I guess, I don't know.

12 MR. MAYER: All right. That's fine. You
13 mentioned that you made a radio call to ATC saying that
14 you were over this site. I'm not sure that that's
15 exactly what you said, but when you made that statement
16 to air traffic control, would you characterize the
17 position of your airplane as directly over where fire
18 was burning on the water or can you improve on that?

19 CAPT. McCLAINE: It was just off our left
20 and below us, and -- if I was right over it I wouldn't
21 have been able to see it, and so -- but I was about as
22 close as you can get to it. And of course maybe there
23 was some burning underneath me, I don't know. What I
24 saw was just on the left.

25 MR. MAYER: Do you know if passengers

1 would have been able to see it?

2 CAPT. McCLAINE: I don't think so. It was
3 too far underneath the airplane. And when it did blow
4 we were pointing right at it so they didn't see it.

5 MR. MAYER: Did you get any indication
6 from the cabin that the passengers had seen anything?

7 CAPT. McCLAINE: I asked one of the flight
8 attendants, I'm not sure if one of the flight attendants
9 came forward or if we actually dinged her and had her
10 come up and I asked if passengers said anything, seen
11 anything and she said no. And I said well there's been
12 an explosion out here and I believe a plane crashed and
13 she said, oh, no. Really? Nobody said anything.

14 MR. MAYER: Nobody in the cabin had said
15 anything?

16 CAPT. McCLAINE: No.

17 MR. MAYER: I believe I heard you say that
18 the landing light that you were watching that obviously
19 later exploded was the traffic that you were supposed to
20 be watching for. Did ATC call any traffic to you, were
21 you searching for traffic? I mean aside from your
22 normal scan of course, but I'm wondering if any specific
23 traffic had been called to you, if you recall?

24 CAPT. McCLAINE: I believe just prior to
25 that they did say there was crossing traffic.

1 MR. MAYER: And you identified that
2 landing light as the crossing traffic?

3 CAPT. McCLAIN: That's what I took to be
4 the traffic they were talking about.

5 MR. MAYER: In response to a question you
6 were asked I believe you said that the landing light
7 appeared to have a normal flight path.

8 CAPT. McCLAIN: That's correct.

9 MR. MAYER: I mean a normal flight path in
10 comparison to what airplanes normally do as they depart
11 JFK. But I believe I also heard you say that it had a
12 normal flight path until it disappeared. Did --

13 CAPT. McCLAIN: That means -- I mean when
14 the light went out. I mean there was the explosion and
15 there was no more light.

16 MR. MAYER: But we shouldn't take your
17 characterization of the light disappearing or you saying
18 the light going out as the light actually turning off or
19 disappearing from view; is that correct? I'm not sure
20 if I asked that question very clearly, let me try it
21 again. Did you see the light turn off?

22 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

23 MR. MAYER: Did you see the light actually
24 disappear from your field of view?

25 CAPT. McCLAIN: Well, the explosion made

1 it disappear from view, put it that way.

2 MR. MAYER: I see. There was no gap
3 between --

4 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

5 MR. MAYER: -- your view of a landing
6 light and your view of the explosion?

7 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

8 MR. MAYER: The explosion immediately
9 occurred?

10 CAPT. McCLAIN: And put out the light.

11 MR. MAYER: I understand. In describing
12 the position of the light earlier you characterized it
13 as being either left of center or near center, and just
14 for clarification, you're -- I wanted to ask if you were
15 talking about the center of your wind-screen? If you
16 don't recall that discussion we can skip the question,
17 but --

18 CAPT. McCLAIN: Would you please say that
19 again.

20 MR. MAYER: Sure. And it might not be a
21 very good question actually. Maybe I should just ask it
22 from the beginning. At about the time of the explosion
23 can you describe the position of the landing light on
24 your wind-screen?

25 CAPT. McCLAIN: Just left of center.

1 MR. MAYER: And you mean left of center of
2 your wind-screen?

3 CAPT. McCLAIN: No. Of the center post.

4 MR. MAYER: The center post. That's the
5 clarification I was trying to get. And I believe this
6 has been asked before and I apologize, but at about that
7 moment, at the moment of the explosion, can you give an
8 approximate clock position to the sun?

9 CAPT. McCLAIN: Just before the
10 explosion?

11 MR. MAYER: That's right.

12 CAPT. McCLAIN: It was probably about 5,
13 5:00.

14 MR. MAYER: Just at the time of the
15 explosion the sun was at about your 5:00 position; is
16 that correct?

17 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yes.

18 MR. MAYER: I believe your statement was
19 characterized as that you saw the explosion occur and
20 you estimated between 13 and 15,000 feet, and I wanted
21 to make sure we had your recollection or your best
22 estimate of the altitude of the explosion.

23 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah, I believe it was 13
24 to 15,000 feet.

25 MR. MAYER: Okay. You were asked if you

1 gave consideration to taking evasive action. I just
2 want to make sure the record is clear. Did you take any
3 evasive action?

4 CAPT. McCLAIN: No, I didn't, but I did
5 think of it.

6 MR. MAYER: You did think of it. You did
7 not alter speed or course?

8 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

9 MR. MAYER: I guess I'd ask if you've had
10 the opportunity to speak -- with the exception your
11 first officer, have you had the opportunity to speak
12 with any other eye witnesses to the event?

13 CAPT. McCLAIN: I haven't spoken to any
14 eye witnesses, no. I heard that one was trying to --
15 wanted to ask me a couple questions, but I never did
16 speak to him.

17 MR. MAYER: Okay.

18 CAPT. McCLAIN: Or communicate with him.

19 MR. MAYER: I believe that I have made it
20 to the end of my list, maybe we'll go around the room
21 one more time and see if folks have any questions for
22 you.

23 MR. BRAZY: I just have one last question,
24 I believe, and it pertains to as you flew over the fire
25 that you saw in the water and you made your radio

1 transmission to ATC. Was there anything that you recall
2 in the air as you flew over the accident site, was there
3 any smoke, was there a trail that reached up to your
4 altitude, was there anything else in the vicinity?

5 CAPT. McCLAINE: No, I didn't see anything
6 that brought any attention, no, caught my attention all.

7 MR. BRAZY: Thank you. That's all that I
8 have.

9 MR. MAYER: Dennis, do you have anything
10 else?

11 MR. RODRIGUES: Yeah. The off-color light
12 question was asked and I started to repeat the question
13 to some extent. Did the intensity of it change at all,
14 did it seem to vary?

15 CAPT. McCLAINE: It seemed to be pretty
16 constant.

17 MR. RODRIGUES: Just one constant light,
18 not changing in size or --

19 CAPT. McCLAINE: Well, maybe got a little
20 bit brighter as it got closer, but not a lot. I mean,
21 it was real bright further out and it remained bright
22 until it was done and still just a little bit off color.

23 MR. RODRIGUES: And was there any haze or
24 smoke or anything that seemed to be trailing it?

25 CAPT. McCLAINE: No, no. Not at all. Not

1 that I could see anyway. I did look for it, I thought
2 at first maybe it was a fire or something.

3 MR. RODRIGUES: The off-color light I
4 think you said came to an end in an explosion, it turned
5 into an explosion?

6 CAPT. McCLAIN: Uh-huh.

7 MR. RODRIGUES: And the fireball that
8 resulted from that, what do you see as the motion of
9 that fireball? Again this has been asked before, but
10 just to clarify.

11 CAPT. McCLAIN: The explosion just
12 happened right in front of me there and it disappeared
13 right there, with the two wings coming out the bottom.
14 I mean, it didn't fall down to the water at all, it just
15 disappeared right about the same level.

16 MR. RODRIGUES: By disappear you mean?

17 CAPT. McCLAIN: Burned itself up.

18 MR. RODRIGUES: And there was no light
19 there and there was just the two descending objects with
20 light trailing?

21 CAPT. McCLAIN: Uh-huh.

22 MR. RODRIGUES: Any smoke --

23 CAPT. McCLAIN: It stayed there for, you
24 know, maybe a couple seconds but then was gone.

25 MR. RODRIGUES: Any smoke resulting from

1 all of this activity?

2 CAPT. McCLAINE: I thought there was smoke
3 from that that trailed up and I guess the smoke went all
4 the way down to the water. I didn't think much of it
5 until I flew alongside and it looked like -- when I was
6 looking down at the fires in the water it looked -- at
7 first I thought what is that, well it's got to be fire
8 because it was sort of darkened. And I said well that's
9 smoke, I'm looking through the smoke. And you could
10 also -- I thought we flew right next to a calm of smoke
11 just on the left side of the airplane. And I didn't
12 think much of it at that time and somebody else said why
13 did you have smoke at that altitude if you were above
14 it. I guess -- I don't know, I guess hot air rises.

15 MR. RODRIGUES: You were at 16,000 feet
16 and you said the explosion was about 13 to 15,000 feet.
17 Was there a clear line horizon line that helped you
18 distinguish that you recall seeing?

19 CAPT. McCLAINE: Not right where he was
20 at, I wouldn't say. It was pretty dark, but just a
21 little bit -- within my field of vision you could see
22 the horizon, just with your peripheral vision, yeah.

23 MR. RODRIGUES: And you believe expanding
24 that horizon line would have put that explosion below
25 the horizon?

1 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah, or just a little
2 bit -- or just a -- yeah, just a little below the
3 horizon, I believe.

4 MR. RODRIGUES: That's all I have.
5 Thanks.

6 MR. WALTERS: Did you ever see any traffic
7 overhead? This is a general question, but any other
8 traffic that you were -- or do you remember ever seeing
9 an airplane, any other traffic above your altitude.

10 CAPT. McCLAIN: Well, not right above us
11 but, I mean, yes, further out there was other aircrafts
12 that was higher than us flying. And we saw aircrafts go
13 by us at different altitudes and everything was pretty
14 normal night out there. There was a bit of traffic.
15 Previously to that when we were coming up on the Sandy
16 Point we asked if we could go out on the 247 radio to
17 join the radio out at South Hampton and they denied us
18 that because there was traffic, and so we had to go from
19 Sandy Point to Hampton. And so there was traffic out
20 that night and I did see quite a bit. And there was
21 some above us and a few below us.

22 MR. WALTERS: With your permission I'm
23 wondering if we could have him read the statement that
24 he gave to his company so that there might be something
25 in there that we -- rather than find out about it

1 later. Would that be appropriate to have it be read in
2 and then --

3 MR. MAYER: I don't have any objection to
4 that. Why don't we -- if you don't mind, why don't we
5 wait until we just complete the table.

6 MR. WALTERS: I was thinking if there was
7 anything in there that raised a question.

8 MR. MAYER: Would you mind doing that?

9 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

10 MR. MAYER: Well, let's wait just a moment
11 and finish going around the table.

12 MR. MANNO: I just have one more
13 question. You saw the bright light of the off-colored
14 light and then the explosion and it disappeared and you
15 saw two objects going down with the 4,000 foot trail. I
16 think you indicated that a clear distinction that there
17 was a separation between the two objects?

18 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah, there was -- it
19 sort of went out like that and down, which is one reason
20 why I thought they were on opposite sides of the
21 fuselage, and I didn't -- that's another reason I took
22 it to be the wings, and -- but yeah, there was two
23 distinctive trails going down to the water.

24 MR. MANNO: There was a good separation
25 between them?

1 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah.

2 MR. MANNO: That's all I have. Thank you.

3 MR. YOUNG: Other than the two objects that
4 you saw fall after the explosion, was there anything
5 else that you saw while you were watching that as the
6 thing went downward that you would identify as an
7 airplane part?

8 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

9 MR. YOUNG: Or that appeared to be an
10 airplane part?

11 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

12 MR. YOUNG: When you saw the initial
13 explosion, prior to that the light was on and at that
14 time you would have expected that everything in that
15 airplane was normal prior to that explosion?

16 CAPT. McCLAIN: As far as I could see
17 everything was normal.

18 MR. YOUNG: Would you characterize that
19 explosion, would you say it was a large explosion, a
20 fairly -- I mean, was it a big explosion when you saw it
21 initially? I know you said went boom and then went away
22 real quickly.

23 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah, it was a pretty
24 good -- it was a good sized explosion. To me anybody
25 that was on board that airplane was dead instantly. It

1 was -- it was a -- yes, a good sized explosion.

2 MR. YOUNG: And this is a real hard one,
3 but would the explosion you saw be characterized as an
4 explosion external to the airplane or would you think
5 that -- I mean, you couldn't tell the airplane itself,
6 but what I'm trying to drive at here is we're looking at
7 whether it's an internal initial explosion or something
8 that is bigger, and that's why I've asked you to
9 characterize the explosion.

10 CAPT. McCLAIN: Well, that's one reason
11 why the way I originally described it was an in-flight
12 explosion, to me it was all self-contained. Whatever
13 caused that explosion was on board that aircraft.

14 MR. YOUNG: And --

15 CAPT. McCLAIN: Whether it be a bomb or
16 the fuel tank, whatever, it was -- it came from within
17 the aircraft.

18 MR. YOUNG: And you mentioned that it was
19 yellowish orange I think, so in your mind it was
20 obviously fuel, fuel was involved in it?

21 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah.

22 MR. YOUNG: As it exploded, could you
23 estimate the upward extent of the initial explosion, in
24 relation to your altitude between 17 and 16,000 feet?

25 CAPT. McCLAIN: I don't think it really

1 went above my altitude at all. It was just -- basically
2 put a dot there saying it's the airplane, it was just
3 evenly all around.

4 MR. YOUNG: And it went rapidly, in other
5 words it went boom and --

6 CAPT. McCLAIN: Uh-huh.

7 MR. YOUNG: How well -- in your mind, how
8 well do you recall this event? In other words, do you
9 think about it a lot?

10 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

11 MR. YOUNG: Is it something -- but is it
12 something you're fairly confident that you still have a
13 very good recollection of this event?

14 CAPT. McCLAIN: I think I have a pretty
15 good recollection of it still. Some of the details
16 maybe aren't as fresh in my memory as they were.
17 Reading it or whatever brings them back, but for the
18 most part I think I remember things pretty accurately
19 concerning it.

20 MR. YOUNG: But it's not something you're
21 going to forget any time soon?

22 CAPT. McCLAIN: Oh, I'll never forget it
23 for the rest of my life.

24 MR. YOUNG: And the last question I have
25 is: Did you see the CIA video that was produced based

1 on the FBI and the CIA's analysis of the witness
2 statements?

3 CAPT. McCLAINE: You mean the one where
4 the nose blew off and the airplane flew and one wing
5 came off and another wing came off basically?

6 MR. YOUNG: Well the specific one that the
7 CIA did is that the nose did come off but then the
8 airplane pitches up approximately 2 to 3,000 feet, the
9 carcass I guess is the best way to put it. I'm just
10 curious if you saw that.

11 CAPT. McCLAINE: I think I did, yeah.
12 I've seen a couple of them at least anyhow.

13 MR. YOUNG: Yeah, there are two different
14 ones. But I guess my question is based on the video
15 where the airplane -- the carcass of the airplane --

16 CAPT. McCLAINE: I didn't see it pitch up,
17 no. Everything ended right there at that explosion, as
18 far as I'm concerned.

19 MR. YOUNG: So in your mind the ability of
20 the carcass of that airplane to zoom up 3,000 feet
21 without you --

22 CAPT. McCLAINE: Well, because I saw the
23 wings blow off. If there's nothing to propel it up
24 there, unless the wind lifted it up there, unless that
25 explosion blew the fuselage up there, I can't see that

1 happening. And plus if it had no nose, I can't see an
2 open space pushing against the wind. I didn't see that
3 happen.

4 MR. YOUNG: We'd be cutting new trails in
5 aerodynamics if we could do that. That was just my
6 question, whether you thought based on what you recall
7 at that time whether you thought that there was a
8 possibility that that thing could have zoomed up without
9 you having seen it or some evidence.

10 CAPT. McCLAINE: I don't think so, no.
11 One was a little more accurate than the other but not a
12 lot.

13 MR. YOUNG: That's all.

14 MR. MAYER: Just to I guess clear some of
15 those questions up. I think that what Bob was just
16 asking and I'm going to ask you, did you see -- let me
17 start again. The explosion occurred at the maximum
18 altitude?

19 CAPT. McCLAINE: As far as I --

20 MR. MAYER: You saw no activity?

21 CAPT. McCLAINE: I didn't see anything go
22 after that. In other words, I can -- magician can pull
23 rabbits out of their hats or whatever, but -- there's a
24 lot of slight of hand or whatever, but I didn't see
25 anything after that explosion. It all ended right

1 | there.

2 MR. MAYER: Thank you.

3 CAPT. McCLAIN: And everything went down.

4 MR. MAYER: And as things were going down,
5 you said you saw what appeared to be two objects that
6 were falling and I think I heard you characterize them
7 as it appeared that those objects were on opposite sides
8 of the fuselage?

9 CAPT. McCLAINE: That's correct.

10 MR. MAYER: Did you ever see the fuselage
11 at the same time you were seeing those two objects?

12 CAPT. McCLAINE: No, I did not.

13 MR. MAYER: My last question then is on a
14 completely different vein. TCAS is the Traffic
15 Collision Avoidance System, and I'm wondering if your
16 aircraft was TCAS equipped.

17 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yes.

18 MR. MAYER: Were you making use of TCAS?

19 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yes.

20 MR. MAYER: At any time that you were
21 observing the landing light that ultimately exploded,
22 did you identify or return on your TCAS display what you
23 thought might be corresponding to the aircraft that was
24 that landing light?

25 CAPT. McCLAINE: I think we did, but I

1 don't recall.

2 MR. MAYER: Fair enough.

3 CAPT. McCLAINE: I have it on a lower
4 setting and I'm pretty sure we did, but I don't recall.

5 MR. MAYER: Thank you very much. I think
6 that's all the questions. Is that all the questions
7 that we have? Then we'll go ahead and ask you, if you
8 don't mind, to read -- I don't know how the statement
9 begins, but perhaps you can just remind us when the
10 statement was written and --

11 CAPT. McCLAINE: Okay. This is the flight
12 pilot for TWA 800 explosion report, flight number BBE
13 507. That was the Eastwind flight. On July 17th, '96.
14 Eastwind Airlines destination was Trenton. I was in a
15 Boeing 737 200, a basic model, it was November 221 U.S.
16 Out and off times were 1951 and 2010 local, on and in
17 were 2101 and 2103 local. I was the captain, and the
18 First Officer Vincent Fuschetti was the first officer.
19 Crew domicile was Greensboro. The occurrence location
20 was on the Hampton 236 radio 20 DME, the occurrence time
21 about 2030 local. Weather conditions were high cirrus
22 clouds, dusk, at least 40 miles visibility. And the
23 report follows: Flying over the Sandy Point VOR we
24 asked for the 247 radio off Sandy Point to intercept the
25 Hampton 236 radio, detected a 139, and we were denied

1 because of traffic. So we proceeded to Hampton as we
2 were, and on the way were told to descend from flight
3 level 240 to flight level 200. Just prior to the
4 descent I spotted TWA 800, which appeared to have either
5 one landing light on or two very close together on. It
6 was a very bright light and was moving somewhat toward
7 us but still crossing our path from our right to left.
8 The light was a little off color for a landing light so
9 at first I thought it might be a fire but didn't see any
10 smoke trail which should have still been visible at the
11 time if there were one. So I passed it off as a landing
12 light from a very large aircraft such as a Boeing 747,
13 which appeared to be just out of JFK. It was definitely
14 the brightest light in the sky. Just as we were about
15 to level off at flight level 200 we were told to descend
16 to 16,000 feet MSL with a good rate through flight level
17 180. Passing through flight level 180 we turned over
18 Hampton to intercept a 236 radio. Passing 17,000 feet I
19 flicked on my left inboard landing light to signal the
20 other aircraft, TWA 800, that I had him in sight. The
21 aircraft appeared to be slightly left of our 12:00
22 position about on a Hampton 236 radio and at about
23 15,000 to 13,000 feet MSL at about 15 to 19 DME. As I
24 flicked on the light the other aircraft exploded into a
25 very large ball of flames, almost immediately two

1 flaming objects with flames trailing about 4,000 feet
2 behind them fell out of the bottom of the ball of
3 flame. It was too dark to identify any objects or see
4 any debris. I thought the objects could be the wings
5 which were full of fuel. I immediately called Boston
6 ATC and reported an in-flight explosion out over the
7 water. I stated this twice but didn't get an immediate
8 reply. ATC then issued a couple of instructions to at
9 least two other aircraft, routine messages. Then
10 another aircraft reported that there was indeed an
11 in-flight explosion and gave a position report off JFK.
12 I then called back and stated that the explosion and
13 calm of smoke was on the Hampton 236 radio 20 DME, which
14 at this time was right where we were. The smoke calm
15 was just to our left side. Another couple of aircrafts
16 came up and also reported seeing fire falling into the
17 sea. ATC then started a short roll call. My first
18 officer then said to me that he thought it was TWA 800.
19 ATC called TWA 800 a couple times with no reply. I then
20 said to ATC I think that's them. He replied I think
21 you're right. I then said God bless them. First
22 Officer Fuschetti and I quickly discussed orbiting the
23 site or whatever action we could take. Since ATC made
24 no request we decided to continue on to Trenton because
25 of the darkness below, passengers on board and our fuel

1 state. We then were handed off to New York ATC and told
2 to descend to 12,000 feet where following descent to
3 4,000 feet. During the descent to 4,000 feet a Navy
4 plane called and they were directed to the scene to help
5 out. We told him it was on the Hampton 236 radio 20 DME
6 and offered our help to New York. We were then switched
7 to Maguire ATC for our approach into Trenton. I did
8 call Eastwind dispatch at Trenton to report the
9 explosion and at Greensboro once more called and spoke
10 to the dispatcher and the director of operations for
11 Eastwind Airlines. Prior to the explosion I did not see
12 any missile, air to air, or round air or as I have seen
13 in the press. I did mention this to my first officer
14 just after the explosion. I still think it was a
15 landing light I saw on the other aircraft, TWA 800, but
16 can't rule out that it may have been an engine or wing
17 fire due to the color of the light and its brightest.
18 I'm not familiar with the Boeing 737 landing lights.
19 And when I referred to the as I seen in the press, when
20 I got home that night I turned on CNN right away and
21 seen what was going on, because I had no information at
22 that time, so that's how I referred to it in there when
23 I wrote the report up.

24 MR. MAYER: I appreciate you reading that
25 for us. You said when you got home you turned on CNN.

1 Can you tell us when you actually wrote that statement?

2 CAPT. McCLAIN: That night.

3 MR. MAYER: After --

4 CAPT. McCLAIN: Just after the first -- I
5 called my wife right away after talking to the director
6 of operations to say I was on my way home, said you
7 might want to turn on the TV and see, there's been an
8 air accident. So I went home and she said yeah there
9 was and she had the TV on then, I saw, I said well I'm
10 going to go type up a report.

11 MR. MAYER: So you then typed up this
12 report?

13 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah, within 15 minutes
14 of getting home I was typing up the report.

15 MR. MAYER: I'm sure that your reading the
16 statement will generate some questions here.

17 MR. YOUNG: And you said we could have a
18 copy of that statement?

19 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yes.

20 MR. YOUNG: I appreciate that.

21 MR. WALTERS: The FBI never asked for a
22 copy of that?

23 CAPT. McCLAIN: I'm not sure if they did
24 or not. I don't think so.

25 MR. WALTERS: Well my feeling is they

1 didn't because it wasn't included in our paperwork. But
2 I'm surprised they didn't ask to get a copy of it.

3 MR. MAYER: Who did you provide a copy of
4 the statement to?

5 CAPT. McCLAIN: I gave a -- I gave a copy
6 to Richard Hirsch and Eastwind Airlines, and those are
7 the only two, as far as I know. That I can recall
8 anyway.

9 MR. MAYER: Does anyone have any questions
10 to follow up?

11 MR. RODRIGUES: Could you describe the two
12 objects that descended and left the 4,000 foot trail?
13 And what I'm trying to visualize is what it might look
14 like. Was the 4,000 foot trail --

15 CAPT. McCLAIN: Continuous line of flame.

16 MR. RODRIGUES: It was just a continuous
17 line of claim or was the flame shooting up but it was a
18 continuous line?

19 CAPT. McCLAIN: The continuous line was
20 two of them, and of course for the first part they were
21 still connected to the ball and then of course the ball
22 disappeared and of course they fell further down while
23 the ends of the --

24 MR. RODRIGUES: Trail?

25 CAPT. McCLAIN: They sort of stopped

1 about -- I mean I say 4,000 feet, obviously that's a
2 guess, maybe 5.

3 MR. RODRIGUES: Sure.

4 CAPT. McCLAIN: Then they just burned
5 themselves out, I guess, or whatever. It was just a
6 long, long trail.

7 MR. RODRIGUES: Okay. Thanks.

8 MR. MANNO: I just have one question. In
9 your statement you just read I thought you said the Navy
10 airplane called back for assistance.

11 CAPT. McCLAIN: He said he had some
12 flares and he had been out and he was I guess -- to me
13 it sounded like he was south of our position, and we
14 were off the coast of New Jersey at that time, about
15 ready to turn in bound to cut across New Jersey with
16 Maguire ATC. And he said he had some flares ready to go
17 up and offer assistance and draw some flares. I think
18 he also mentioned that his IFF wasn't working.

19 MR. MANNO: Had you heard his radio call
20 before?

21 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

22 MR. MANNO: You hadn't?

23 CAPT. McCLAIN: Not until I got to New
24 York.

25 MR. MANNO: That's all. Thank you.

1 MR. YOUNG: How long, just roughly, from
2 the time that the explosion occurred and you remember
3 hearing this Navy airplane talking to New York center?
4 How long would you think that was, roughly?

5 CAPT. McCLAINE: Oh, boy.

6 MR. YOUNG: Well, was it five minutes, ten
7 minutes?

8 CAPT. McCLAINE: At least five minutes.

9 MR. YOUNG: At least five minutes, okay.

10 CAPT. McCLAINE: Probably a little longer,
11 because we had descended and all. Went for a little
12 while at 16,000, we got handed off from Boston to New
13 York ATC and then we went to 16,000 feet and then we
14 were given descent down to 12 and then down to 4 and I
15 think it was out of the -- between 12 and 4 that he came
16 up on the air frequency. Just before we left the air
17 frequency for Maguire, so it was probably closer to ten
18 minutes even.

19 MR. YOUNG: And one more quick question.
20 When you talked to the initial FBI people, the two times
21 they talked to you the first day or so, did any of them
22 indicate to you that they had any aviation experience or
23 did they ask any aviation questions that would indicate
24 to you that they had some technical background that, you
25 know, they knew the front and back of an airplane and

1 that kind of thing?

2 CAPT. McCLAIN: No. The one that actually
3 came out and interviewed me, she was actually fairly new
4 to the Charlotte area. And so that's why I say that
5 interview was for about an hour half, actually about an
6 hour was on the airplane and then she asked a couple of
7 questions about the local area. And I had to give her
8 directions on how to get up to our house and everything,
9 which of course isn't uncommon. But she I don't think
10 had -- I think she got transferred down from New Jersey
11 or something like that and -- but I think they asked me
12 pertinent questions but I don't think they had any
13 aviation experience, no.

14 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

15 MR. WALTERS: Did you ever receive a copy
16 of any of the statements that they --

17 CAPT. McCLAIN: From the FBI?

18 MR. WALTERS: Yes.

19 CAPT. McCLAIN: No, never.

20 MR. WALTERS: So you never saw what they
21 put down in relation to what you said --

22 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

23 MR. WALTERS: -- and corrected it or
24 confirmed it or anything?

25 CAPT. McCLAIN: No.

1 MR. MAYER: I wanted to ask one follow-up
2 question to what Dennis was asking you just a moment
3 ago. You characterized the -- I think 4,000 foot
4 approximately continuous trail of fire from the objects
5 that fell, the two objects that fell from the
6 explosion. Can you describe for me how that continuous
7 trail of fire developed and maybe provide a little more
8 detail about what I would have seen if I had been
9 sitting on your jump seat watching that with you?

10 CAPT. McCLAINE: Well, as you seen the
11 ball, and then these things come out and went out just a
12 little bit and then fell straight. Like maybe they were
13 sort of shot out just a little bit, not very far, still
14 within the -- like I said, the shadow of the ball of
15 flame or whatever, and started to fall straight to the
16 ocean, and the whole time being connected to this ball
17 with this trail of fire and they kept on falling, they
18 just trail of fire behind them. And of course then
19 finally after about 4,000 feet everything burnt out
20 behind it and was gone and of course the main ball was
21 gone and you just had these two trails or streamers
22 going down.

23 MR. MAYER: So the approximately 4,000
24 foot trail of fire, the pair of those trails of fire,
25 developed from the explosion and outward and then

1 downward?

2 CAPT. McCLAIN: Uh-huh.

3 MR. MAYER: The two objects -- I recognize
4 that you're watching two objects that are at the bottom
5 portion of these trails of fire, but would you be able
6 to characterize the size of one object relative to the
7 other or would you say that they appeared to be
8 approximately the same size?

9 CAPT. McCLAIN: I couldn't really see
10 them, but they appeared to be from the flames coming out
11 of them about the same size and same weight or density.
12 They were falling exactly the same speed and they were
13 just together all the way down.

14 MR. MAYER: All right.

15 CAPT. McCLAIN: Separated but together
16 with their rate of descent and everything.

17 MR. MAYER: Does anyone else have any
18 questions?

19 MR. BRAZY: One last question, I promise.
20 During your observations from the time you saw the
21 landing light until you flew over the fire on the water,
22 could you characterize -- what was your ride like?

23 CAPT. McCLAIN: Smooth.

24 MR. BRAZY: Was it glass, was it any
25 turbulence?

1 CAPT. McCLAIN: Very smooth, nice night,
2 beautiful night. That's how we characterized it prior
3 to that.

4 MR. YOUNG: One real quick one not
5 directly related to this, but you had indicated that you
6 had been interviewed for the video on the Discovery
7 Channel or the Learning Channel or whoever it was. Did
8 they contact you? In other words, I mean, do you know
9 how they find out who you were to call you?

10 CAPT. McCLAIN: Yeah, they -- I think
11 they did mention there was another -- pardon me, there
12 was another author, she was a part-time correspondent
13 too on New York, I believe her name was Judy something.
14 I've seen her on TV a couple times, but she was writing
15 a book and I think they may have gotten my name from
16 her.

17 MR. MAYER: Is there anything else that we
18 have for Captain McClaine? Well, I thank you very, very
19 much for coming on your day off here to talk with us and
20 answer our questions. And I think we'll conclude the
21 interview and go off the record now.

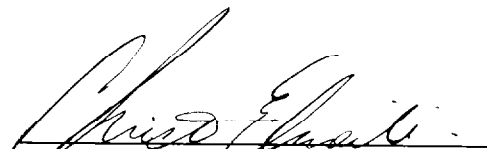
22
23
24 (WHEREUPON, the interview concluded at
25 11:30 A.M. on March 25, 1999.)

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF MECKLENBURG) C E R T I F I C A T E

I, CHRISTINE ELMINOWSKI, Notary Public, do hereby certify that CAPTAIN DAVID McCLAINE was present before me on March 25, 1999, that the interview was taken and transcribed by me; and that the foregoing seventy-six (76) pages are a true and accurate transcript of the interview of said CAPTAIN DAVID McCLAINE. I further certify that the persons were present as stated.

I further certify that I am not of counsel for or in the employment of any of the parties to this action, nor am I interested in the result of said action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name, this 31st day of March, 1999.


CHRISTINE ELMINOWSKI
NOTARY PUBLIC

My commission Expires: October 4th, 1999