NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD Engineering & Computer Services Division Washington, D.C. 20594



SPECIALIST'S FACTUAL REPORT OF INVESTIGATION Cockpit Voice Recorder DCA97MA017

by

Vincent M. Giuliana Electronics Engineer/CVR

Warning

The reader of this report is cautioned that the transcription of a CVR tape is not a precise science but is the best product possible from an NTSB group investigative effort. The transcript, or parts thereof, if taken out of context, could be misleading. The attached CVR transcript should be viewed as an accident investigation tool to be used in conjunction with other evidence gathered during the investigation. Conclusions or interpretations should not be made using the transcript as the sole source of information.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Research and Engineering Washington, D.C. 20594

April 18, 1997

Cockpit Voice Recorder

Group Chairman's Factual Report by Vincent M. Giuliana

A. ACCIDENT

Location:

Monroe, Michigan

Date:

January 9, 1997

Time:

1554 eastern standard time (EST)

Aircraft:

Comair Flight 3272

Embraer EMB-120RT, N265CA

NTSB Number:

DCA97MA017

B. GROUP

Chairman:

Vincent M. Giuliana

Electronics Engineer/CVR

National Transportation Safety Board

Member:

Jeffrey M. Rich

Air Safety Investigator

Federal Aviation Administration

Member:

Chuck Jordan

Check Airman, EMB-120

Comair

Member:

J.C. Lawson III

Air Line Pilots Association

Member:

Mark W. Lowell

Flight Operations

Embraer Aircraft Corporation

C. SUMMARY

This transcript was derived from a Fairchild Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) (Model A100A, S/N 61146) removed from the accident aircraft and delivered to the audio laboratory of the National Transportation Safety Board.

The playback time of the recording was approximately thirty-one minutes and four seconds (31:04). All times incorporated into the transcript are in eastern standard times, correlated with a copy of the Detroit Metro ATCT (Arrival East Position) tape.

D. DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

The CVR unit recovered from the accident showed evidence of extensive exposure to both fire and smoke but only moderate impact damage. While the entire external cover was discolored and coated with a heavy layer of soot, the majority of the impact damage was limited to the front right corner of the recorder. Although the crash case was observed to be distorted at its front end and the thermal jacket was discolored in several areas, the audio tape was successfully preserved.

The four channels of the CVR contained audio information from the cockpit area microphone (CAM), the captain's position, the first officer's position and the intercom system. The recording was of excellent quality, enhanced by the use of the intra-cockpit intercom system. Although the majority of the crewmember conversation was recorded via the intercom system (as evidenced by the same verbal information on the captain's, first officer's and intercom CVR channels), several verbalizations were only recorded on one CVR channel, consistent with the cockpit being wired with "hot" microphones. During the conversation between the captain and the flight attendant, her voice is identified as HOT-3 because it was most discernible and intelligible on the captain's hot CVR channel rather than the CAM channel.

The transcript begins at 1523:37 as Comair thirty-two seventy-two is in contact with the Indianapolis Air Route Traffic Control Center. According to a subsequent radio call at 1523:49, the aircraft is somewhere below flight level two one zero, about to be instructed to "climb and maintain flight level two one zero".

Vincent M. Giuliana Electronic Engineer/CVR Transcript of a Fairchild cockpit voice recorder (Model A100A, S/N 61146) installed on an Embraer EMB-120RT, N265CA, which was involved in an accident in Monroe, Michigan on January 9, 1997.

LEGEND

CAM	Cockpit area microphone
НОТ	Crewmember hot microphone
RDO	Radio transmission from accident aircraft
-1	Voice (or position) identified as Captain
-2	Voice (or position) identified as First Officer
-3	Voice identified as Flight Attendant
-?	Unidentifiable voice
COM	Misc. radio communications or aircraft aural warnings heard on crewmember CVR channels
ZID	Indianapolis Air Route Traffic Control Center
ZOB	Cleveland Air Route Traffic Control Center
DTW	Detroit Metro ATCT
OPS	Airline Operations
CACT50	America West Airlines Flight Fifty
*	Unintelligible word
#	Expletive deleted
•••	Pause
()	Questionable text
[]	Editorial insertion
-	Break in continuity

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
1523:37 CAM	[start of recording]		
1523:37 CAM	[start of transcript]		
		1523:39 RDO-1	thanks.
1523:41 INT-2	he's gotta use the phone.		
		1523:49 ZID	comair thirty-two seventy-two climb maintain flight level two one zero.
		1523:52 RDO-1	flight level two one zero comair thirty-two seventy-two, thank you.
1523:57 INT-2	twenty-one.		
1523:59 INT-1	set once and set twice.		
1525:44 CAM	[sound of three tones similar to that of the altitude alerter]		
		1526:59 ZID	comair ah thirty-two seventy-two any improvements ah with the climb there?

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TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
		1527:03 RDO-1	comair thirty-two seventy-two affirmative it's ah smooth here at two one oh we're getting ah occasional light chop at one nine oh cause we were right at the tops.
		1527:11 ZID	right at the tops appreciate it, thanks.
1528:54 INT-1	well, ready for cruise?		
1528:56 INT-2	yup, thanks.		
1529:09 CAM	[sound similar to that of slight decrease in propeller rpm frequency]		
1529:13 CAM	[sound of several unknown clicks]		
1529:52 INT-1	power and NP set, pressurization check, cruise check complete.		
1530:52 CAM	[sound of unknown squeaks]		
		1531:22 ZID	comair thirty-two seventy-two contact cleveland one two three point niner.
		1531:28 RDO-1	one two three point niner comair thirty-two seventy-two, good day.

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TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
		1531:31 ZID	so long.
		1531:32 COM	[sound of tone similar to that of frequency change]
		1531:34 RDO-1	good afternoon cleveland center, comair thirty-two seventy-two flight level two one zero.
		1531:39 ZOB	comair thirty-two seventy-two cleveland center, roger.
		1533:05 ZOB	comair thirty-two seventy-two how's your ride there?
		1533:08 RDO-1	comair thirty-two seventy-two it's smooth.
		1535:37 ZOB	comair thirty-two seventy-two descend and maintain one two thousand the ah detroit altimeter two nine two one.
		1535:44 RDO-1	two nine two one descend and maintain one two twelve thousand comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1535:52 INT-2	yeah there's twelve gotta go [sound of human whistle]		
1535:57 INT-1	down.		

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TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
		1536:07 ZOB	comair thirty-seven I'm sorry thirty-two seventy-two contact cleveland one two zero point four five.
		1536:13 RDO-1	one two zero point four five comair thirty-two seventy-two, good day.
		1536:18 ZOB	*
		1536:18 COM	[sound of tone similar to frequency change]
1536:43 INT-2	might get a speed warning here.		
		1536:46 RDO-1	good afternoon cleveland center comair thirty-two seventy- two flight level one nine oh descend and maintain one two twelve thousand.
		1536:52 ZOB	thirty-two seventy-two cleveland center roger no delay down to twelve for traffic.
		1536:56 RDO-1	comair thirty-two seventy-two wilco.
1537:04 INT-2	dive, dive.		
1537:09 HOT-2	whoop whoop dive [sound of human whistle].		

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
1538:03 INT	[sound of chime similar to that of flight attendant chime]		
1538:07 INT-1	need anything?		
1538:08 INT-?	sure don't.		
1538:09 INT-2	no thanks.		
1538:14 HOT-1	would you be kind enough to get me an ice refresher just add some to that.		
1538:18 HOT-3	[unintelligible female voice]		
1538:18 HOT-2	no thanks doing great.		
1538:20 HOT-3	are we already on the descent?		
1538:21 HOT-1	yes ma'am you told them an hour but it's only forty minutes today.		
1538:27 HOT-3	(forty minutes).		
1538:27 HOT-1	didn't I I think I told you forty-five.		

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION

CONTENT

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	
1538:30 HOT-3	(oh that's right you did it).		
1538:32 HOT-1	I go okay well she just knows we're gonna probably have to hold now.		
1538:35 HOT-3	[sound of laughter]		
1538:55 HOT-1	yeah we're only seventy-five miles out right now.		
1538:57 HOT-3	okay great, thanks.		
1538:58 HOT-1	so -		
1538:58 HOT-3	here's your drink.		
1539:00 HOT-1	fifteen fifteen minutes about.		
1539:03 HOT-3	okay.		
1539:04 HOT-1	thank you very much for the ice.		
		1539:07 ZOB	comair

comair thirty-two seventy-two continue descent to one one thousand then fly heading of ah zero three zero to rejoin the mizar arrival off of detroit.

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TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
		1539:14 RDO-1	descend and maintain one one eleven thousand and heading zero three zero to join the arrival comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1539:24 INT-2	okay, there's ah there's eleven and out of detroit we're looking at ah two thirty-nine radial.		
		1540:09 COM	detroit metropolitan airport information hotel two zero two six zulu special wind zero seven zero at six visibility one light snow six hundred scattered ceiling one thousand four hundred broken two thousand one hundred overcast temperature minus three dew point minus four altimeter two niner two one remarks A02 tower visibility one and one half papa zero zero zero zero ILS approach in use runway three right departing runway three center notices to airmen runway two one right, three left closed runway two seven left, nine right closed runway two seven right, nine left closed taxiway yankee eleven closed braking action advisories in effect (local) de-ice procedure in effect gate hold procedure in effect for newark, kennedy, chicago o'hare, philadelphia, st. louis, GRR airports advise on initial contact you have information hotel.
1540:35 INT-1	so what what do you got set up here?		
1540:38 INT-2	I've got detroit.		
1540:46 INT-2	let's see which one of those lines we hit first.		

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
1540:48 CAM	[sound of three tones similar to that of the altitude alerter]		
1540:49 INT-1	okay.		
1541:16 CAM	[sound of audio interrupt similar to that of tape splice]		
		1542:32 COM	[sound of tone similar to that of frequency change]
1542:43 HOT-2	[sound of yawn]		
		1542:51 ZOB	comair thirty-two seventy-two detroit one two four point niner seven.
		1542:54 RDO-1	one two four point niner seven comair thirty-two seventy-two, good day.
		1542:58 COM	[sound of tone similar to that of frequency change]
		1543:03 RDO-1	good afternoon detroit approach comair thirty-two seventy-two one one eleven thousand hotel.
		1543:07 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two detroit approach depart mizar heading zero five zero vector to ILS runway three right final approach course runway three right braking action reported poor by a DC niner.

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TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
		1543:16 RDO-1	roger depart mizar heading zero five zero comair thirty-two seventy-two.
		1544:11 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two maintain one niner zero knots if unable advise.
		1544:15 RDO-1	roger, one niner zero knots comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1544:44 INT-1	I think there's your -		
1544:46 INT-2	ah thanks.		
1544:48 INT-2	whoops.		
1544:49 INT-1	stand by.		
1544:50 INT-2	and five miles for ah for ah mizar.		
		1545:46 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two descend and maintain seven thousand.
		1545:49 RDO-1	seven thousand comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1545:53 INT-1	and seven's in the altitude alerter.		

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
1545:56 INT-2	seven's verified there's mizar and we're turning zero five zero.		
		1546:12 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two turn left heading zero three zero vector for sequencing.
		1546:14 RDO-1	zero three zero comair thirty-two seventy-two.
		1546:57 DTW	northwest two seventy-two information alpha is current winds zero six zero at six visibility one and one half light snow ceiling six hundred broken one thousand one hundred broken two thousand one hundred overcast altimeter's two niner one niner runway three right RVR three thousand five hundred braking action reported poor by DC niner.
1547:17 CAM	[sound of three clicks]		
		1547:18 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two turn right heading zero five five.
1547:20 CAM	[sound of two clicks]		
		1547:21 RDO-1	zero five five comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1547:32 INT-2	[sound similar to that of a human sniffle]		

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION

CONTENT

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE
1547:47 INT-2	let's run the descent check.	
1547:49 INT-1	ice protection?	
1547:51 INT-2	windshield, props, standard seven.	
1547:53 INT-1	ignition?	
1547:54 INT-2	auto.	
1547:55 INT-1	pressurization?	
1547:55 INT-2	it's ah reset for landing in detroit six thirty-nine looks good.	
1548:01 INT-1	altimeters?	
1548:03 INT-2	ah twenty-one.	
1548:04 INT-1	set left.	
1548:05 INT-2	set right.	

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
1548:06 INT-1	landing lights?		
1548:06 INT-2	landing lights on.		
1548:07 INT-1	seatbelt sign?		
1548:08 INT-2	on.		
1548:09 INT-1	PACKs and bleeds?		
1548:10 INT-2	four lows.		
1548:11 INT-1	crossfeed?		
1548:12 INT-2	crossfeed's off.		
1548:12 INT-1	that completes that.		
1548:14 INT-2	okay a thousand to go uhm we're going to do an ILS to runway three right it'll be a coupled approach flaps twenty-five frequency is one one one point five that's set might as well set that in there inbound course is zero three five.		

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
1548:38			
CAM	[sound of three tones similar to that of the altitude alerter]		
1548:43 INT-2	we're gonna intercept the top somewhere ah whatever altitude he gives us ah twenty-seven hundred's the intercept to the glide slope.		
		1548:47 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two turn right heading zero seven zero.
		1548:50 RDO-1	zero seven zero comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1548:55 CAM	[sound similar to increase in engine/prop noise]		
1549:13 INT-2	it's ah two hundred foot approach with the decision altitude of eight thirty-three you've already got that set in there missed approach will be published climb to eleven hundred and a climbing right turn to three thousand direct to the ah DM locator outer marker "Spencer" * which is ah two twenty-three that's set and hold that will be a teardrop entry questions, comments.		
1549:38 INT-1	no questions twenty-one, fourteen, and forty-three are your bugs.		
1549:43 INT-2	twenty-one, fourteen, forty-three set.		

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
1549:48 INT-1	autofeather?		
1549:50 INT-2	armed.		
1549:51 INT-1	nav radios.		
1549:53 INT-2	nav radios are ah set eleven point five.		
		1549:54 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two turn right to a heading of one four zero reduce speed to one seven zero.
a		1549:59 RDO-1	heading one four zero speed one seven zero comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1550:11 INT-1	I'll be on two.		
1550:11 INT-2	alright.		
		1550:15 RDO-1	good afternoon detroit comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1550:28 INT-1	nobody likes to answer me I'm back.		
		1550:28 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two contact approach one two five point one five so long.

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
		1550:32 RDO-1	one two five point one five comair thirty-two seventy-two, good day.
		1550:36 COM	[sound of tone similar to that of frequency change]
1550:38 INT-2	maybe you should try being abusive with them.		
1550:40 INT-1	huh?		
1550:41 INT-2	gotta try being abusive with them.		
1550:43 INT-1	that's right.		
1550:43 INT-2	answer the phone, dummy.		
1550:44 INT-1	yeah.		
		1550:45 RDO-1	good afternoon detroit approach comair thirty-two seventy-two seven thousand.
		1550:49 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two detroit approach reduce speed to one seven zero and maintain six thousand.

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TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
		1550:54 RDO-1	speed one seven zero descend and maintain six thousand comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1550:57 CAM	[sound of three tones similar to that of the altitude alerter]		
1551:00 INT-1	six.		
1551:00 INT-2	six thousand.		
		1551:14 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two fly heading one four zero.
		1551:17 RDO-1	one four zero comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1551:20 INT-2	wonder what plane he's looking at?		
1551:25 INT-1	ah the one ah that's not going one four zero.		
		1551:27 OPS	thirty-two seventy two you calling detroit?
		1551:30 RDO-1	yes sir we're in range ah positive fuel we'll be at the gate in approximately nine minutes and forty-eight seconds.
	•	1551:38 OPS	approximately, huh?

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
		1551:39 RDO-1	approx-, of course.
		1551:41 OPS	do you guys know if you have any special assistance coming in?
		1551:44 RDO-1	I can't recall anyone coming out so I thi- I think we're all good there all all we'll need is just fuel.
		1551:51 OPS	roger that ah bravo * three.
1551:53 CAM	[sound of three tones similar to that of the altitude alerter]		
		1551:54 RDO-1	roger that and how many do we have going back so I know how many seats to give you?
		1551:58 OPS	ah, you're booked to twenty-eight right now.
		1552:01 RDO-1	okay that'll be our load then we can take them all thanks.
1552:07 INT-1	took 'em a while but they came back to me.		
1552:13 INT-2	that's good news no changes while you were away.		

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TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
		1552:13 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two descend and maintain four thousand.
		1552:16 RDO-1	four thousand comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1552:20 INT-1	four's in the altitude alert.		
1552:23 INT-2	four thousand verified.		
		1553:03 DTW	cactus fifty zero six zero to intercept three right.
		1553:05 CACT50	zero six zero okay you got any windshear reports on the final?
		1553:09 DTW	ah no I haven't had anything ah just ah slick runways and ah low visibilities.
		1553:15 CACT50	okay yeah it's two thirty-seven at thirty-two up here.
		1553:18 DTW	ah you'll pick up a head wind once you get down ah probably oh two thousand feet or so.
		1553:25 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two turn right heading one eight zero reduce speed to one five zero.

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
		1553:29 RDO-1	heading one eight zero speed one five zero comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1553:42 CAM	[sound of three tones similar to that of the altitude alerter]		
		1553:42 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two reduce speed to one five zero.
		1553:45 RDO-1	speed one five zero comair thirty-two seventy-two.
1553:52 INT-2	this guys got -		
1553:53 INT-1	they gotta always tell us twice.		
1553:55 INT-2	he's got short term memory disorder I think.		•
1553:57 INT-1	is that what that is?		
1553:58 INT-2	yeah, he's got alzheimer's that's what it is.		
		1553:59 DTW	comair thirty-two seventy-two now turn left heading zero nine zero plan a vector across the localizer.
		1554:04 RDO-1	heading zero niner zero comair thirty-two seventy-two.

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

AIR-GROUND COMMUNICATION

CONTENT

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE
155 4 :10.9 CAM	[sound of click]	
1554:13.2 CAM	[sound of faint click]	
1554:14.4 CA M	[sound of several unidentified thumps fade in and out]	
1554:15.9 CAM	[sound of several "whirring" noises, similar to that of the elevator trim servo]	
1554:16.0 CAM	[sound of increase in discrete high frequency noise similar to that of power increase]	
1554:17.1 CAM	[significant reduction in background ambient noise]	
1554:20.8 INT-1	looks like your low speed indicator.	
1554:20.9 INT-2	** _.	
1554:23.6 INT-1	power.	
1554:23.9 CAM	[sound similar to that of stickstaker starts]	
1554:24.1 INT-2	thanks.	

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
1554:24.1 CAM	[sound of three chimes and "auto-pilot" aural warning]		
1554:25.9 CA M	[sound similar to that of stickshaker stops]		
1554:26.1 INT-2	oh.		
1554:26.1 INT-1	oh #.		
1554:26.8 CAM	[sound of increase in background noise similar to that of power increase]		
1554:29.0 CA M	[sound of GPWS "bank angle" aural warning]		
1554:29.1 CAM	[sound of three chimes and "auto-pilot" aural warning]		
1554:31.0 CAM	[sound similar to that of stickshaker starts and continues to the end of tape]		
1554;33.3 INT-?	[sound of single human breath]		
1554:34.3 CAM	[sound of three chimes and "auto-pilot" aural warning]		
1554:35.3 CAM	[sound of GPWS "bank angle" aural warning]		

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INTRA-COCKPIT COMMUNICATION

TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT	TIME and SOURCE	CONTENT
1554:37.1 INT-1	[nonpertinent exclamation]		
1554:38.2 CAM	[sound of three chimes and "auto-pilot" aural warning]		
1554:39.1 INT-1	[nonpertinent exclamation]		
1554:40.1 CAM	[end of tape]		