



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, D.C. 20594

January 25, 2017

Attachment 2: First Officer's SMS Messages

HUMAN PERFORMANCE

DCA17FA109

Legend

- Incoming messages are shaded in gray
- Expletives are coded with the symbol: #
- Non-pertinent names are coded with the symbol: @

A. Excerpts from first officer's SMS conversations

1.0 Friend #1

Date	Time (EST)	Message
12/29/2016	23:47:21	Just had the biggest scare of my life. Thought I was going to die
12/30/2016	13:17:16	Here i am dying to hear your story about almost dying
12/31/2016	00:57:13	Okay so I got to the airport last night and there was a freakin blizzard outside. It was super windy and gusty
12/31/2016	00:58:38	We loaded the plane and went to take off. Once we were off the ground, we went to put the gear up and saw that the nose gear light stayed on instead of indicating that it was up and locked
12/31/2016	00:59:29	We cycled it a few times and nothing happened. So the captain said he'd fly while I went to look up the emergency checklist for the gear
12/31/2016	01:01:18	Before I even finished going through the checklist, we went into the clouds and lost all visual reference of the ground
12/31/2016	01:01:39	And this is WV, there's freakin hills everywhere
12/31/2016	01:02:08	To the right of the runway is a big # hill
12/31/2016	01:02:41	And we were only about 2000 ft or so above the ground
12/31/2016	01:03:39	The captain wanted to get out of the clouds so he immediately turned right, where I know there's all these hills
12/31/2016	01:04:42	And he was making really really steep turns, like 60 degrees of bank and descending at like 800ft/min
12/31/2016	01:05:10	And I couldn't see # so the whole time I'm like we're gonna hit the hills. We're gonna hit the freakin hills
12/31/2016	01:06:07	Like 2/3 into a full circle we finally broke out of the clouds
12/31/2016	01:07:08	And when I looked down and to my left a little, there was just a big black hole of there that hill was
12/31/2016	01:07:13	We were super close to it
12/31/2016	01:08:13	So now I'm looking around for airport and the captain saw it and said it was behind us to the right so he started turning that way
12/31/2016	01:08:40	But then we went into the clouds again and it was snowing so hard and it was all white
12/31/2016	01:08:56	And I could tell he was kinda getting disoriented
12/31/2016	01:12:24	Like you know when you're driving and the snow is coming at you in the opposite direction it's hard to see and disorienting but now

		we're also turning and descending and you have to watch your airspeed and bank
12/31/2016	01:12:51	And I'm watching the altimeter and I'm like okay we're getting low
12/31/2016	01:14:38	When we finally broke out again, the airport was like right below us so we couldn't line in for the runway we wanted
12/31/2016	01:16:04	So he called and asked to land in the opposite direction and I'm like crap, are we gonna have a crazy wind on us, which is something you don't want when you land or takeoff
12/31/2016	01:16:15	Tailwind*
12/31/2016	01:16:55	Luckily it wasn't going to be a tailwind but it was going to be a # crosswind
12/31/2016	01:17:18	18 knots gusting up to 30
12/31/2016	01:19:24	So we went to line up for this runway and landed and when we touched down im like thank god it's over..but then! I think since we came in a little fast and with the crazy crosswind, it started pushing us off the runway
12/31/2016	01:19:46	Dude, I was for sure we were going to run off the side of the runway, up the bank and flip over
12/31/2016	01:20:03	The entire time the captain was like # # #
12/31/2016	01:20:05	lol
12/31/2016	01:20:55	We were only a few feet from hitting that bank on the side on the runway when he was able to turn it back
12/31/2016	01:22:11	Then we taxied back. The mechanic was there. We called the chief pilot and he was like yeah but put the pins in (so that the gears won't retract in flight) and you should be fine
12/31/2016	01:22:23	Hahha so off we went again
12/31/2016	01:22:45	just put*
12/31/2016	01:25:00	And you made it the second time?
12/31/2016	01:25:44	Yeah we made it. The captain was pretty shaken up though. I didn't think he was gonna go
12/31/2016	01:29:21	I don't know. I feel like we should've asked ATC for vectors to do an approach. We fly in the clouds all the time and when ceiling's low, you do an approach instead of flying visual
12/31/2016	01:30:11	So I think we should've done that instead of trying to get under the clouds ourselves, especially with all the hills there
12/31/2016	01:30:39	Yeah we had to write a report
12/31/2016	01:33:49	I don't know. It's also kinda hard for me to say since he's the only captain I've ever flown with so I don't really have anyone to compare him to
12/31/2016	01:34:37	But I definitely would've done things a little differently if I were in charge
12/31/2016	01:38:55	So are you gonna get a new pilot? I mean, you literally could have died
12/31/2016	01:40:43	Nah, I'm flying with him as long as I stay in Charleston with
01/17/2017	23:24:56	Captain is sleeping. I'm gonna need you to keep me entertained for the rest of the flight

01/17/2017	23:26:24	Wait wait wait. There's a pilot and a co pilot, and right now the pilot is asleep and the co pilot is texting. Is that accurate?
01/17/2017	23:27:09	Yes
01/17/2017	23:28:32	Wait not entirely because it's captain and first officer. I'm pilot too, you know!
01/17/2017	23:28:42	And I'm the one flying right now
01/17/2017	23:29:02	Jesus Christ
01/17/2017	23:29:06	Texting and flying because texting and driving is played out lol
01/17/2017	23:29:06	How are you texting? I mean signal wise
01/17/2017	23:29:42	I guess I'm still getting signal. We're only at 8000
01/17/2017	23:29:54	Sometimes I get it sometimes I don't
01/17/2017	23:33:06	Can you imagine if this plane had autopilot? We'd both be asleep hahaha
01/17/2017	23:37:54	You wanna track my flight?? Air cargo 1259!

2.0 Friend #2

Date	Time (EDT)	Message
03/31/2017	18:27:12	How was your flight last with all that weather
03/31/2017	18:29:08	It wasn't too bad. We were in it for a little while and then got vectored around
03/31/2017	18:29:16	I'd never seen lightning that close though
03/31/2017	18:29:40	It was really cool. Kinda enjoyed it lol
03/31/2017	18:30:18	Was it bumpy
03/31/2017	18:30:48	Light to moderate. Nothing too crazy
03/31/2017	18:32:00	We stayed down at 4 lol
03/31/2017	18:32:34	How you were on the mountains coming out of West Virginia
03/31/2017	18:33:19	@ ¹ was scud running wasn't he
03/31/2017	18:34:05	You're pretty much above everything at 4
03/31/2017	18:34:40	We asked for 4 as our final so we just stayed down there the entire time. But yeah he doesn't like to be in IMC lol
03/31/2017	18:35:25	Damn that's messed up he's an IFR pilot
03/31/2017	18:36:08	His IFR flying is not great
03/31/2017	18:38:21	Really
03/31/2017	18:38:46	He's use to flying VFR out of Alaska
03/31/2017	18:39:45	Yeah he can fly VFR all day but once he gets in IMC..no bueno

¹ The subject of this SMS was the incident captain

3.0 Group SMS with Friend #3 and Friend #4

Date	Time (EST)	Message
02/02/2017	22:09:44	I just got this book Lonesome Dove that captain recommended. And we were reading it out loud to each other on the flights yesterday 🍷🍷 got a lil book club goin'
02/14/2017	19:34:29	[the captain] totally # me off last week
02/14/2017	19:42:28	Why
02/14/2017	19:46:29	So he's really lazy when it comes to flying. He's asked me to fly for him once or twice when he's tired so I'm like okay whatever
02/14/2017	19:48:01	But then last week, after he broke up with the gf, he was all depressed and he told me he couldn't sleep or whatever so he would ask me to fly for him
02/14/2017	19:48:24	This was like on Monday so I'm like okay fine. I feel bad for the guy, he looks miserable so I'll do it
02/14/2017	19:50:12	Tuesday, same thing. I fly my leg and then when it was his turn, like literally 5 minutes into cruise, he starts yawning and turning in his seat and then he'll turn to me and ask if I could take it
02/14/2017	19:50:25	I'm like fine
02/14/2017	19:50:47	No, I know. It was fine when he would only ask me every once in a while
02/14/2017	19:50:59	But I was literally flying every leg last week
02/14/2017	19:52:21	He asked me the whole week. Even on my leg, he would be sleeping, which whatever, I don't care. I'll do radio and all that. But by Thursday, I was so freakin fed up
02/14/2017	19:53:18	You need to tell him
02/14/2017	19:53:30	No dude, it's all manual
02/14/2017	19:54:54	And what # me off was that he told me he couldn't sleep. And yet when we got to SDF and we had like a 2-3 hour sit, instead of going to take a nap, he would sit in the cafeteria watching Netflix
02/14/2017	19:55:04	You better said something to him
02/14/2017	19:55:10	And then the minute he got the plane, he # falls asleep
02/14/2017	19:55:13	I did
02/14/2017	19:56:10	On Thursday, he started asking me again, of course, and then I turned to him and I was like dude [captain], really? I've been flying all week
02/14/2017	19:57:06	Did he say anything
02/14/2017	19:57:22	You need to threaten him
02/14/2017	19:57:22	So he was like I know I'm sorry, I've been having a rough week
02/14/2017	19:58:21	I'm like I realize that and I've been trying to help but I can't be doing this every day
02/14/2017	19:59:43	So on Friday, he came in with this Atta Boy, Good Job thing that he framed and gave me
02/14/2017	19:59:57	And he didn't ask on Friday but I know he really wanted to

02/14/2017	20:00:17	That sucks!
02/14/2017	20:01:05	He needs to grow the # up. Life happens
02/14/2017	20:03:34	Exactly. I wouldn't have minded if he only asked me to do it for a day or two. But for him to do it for a week straight, like with now you're just being a lazy #. Especially when I would have to do his job as well on my legs
02/17/2017	18:42:10	@ blew a tire yesterday
02/17/2017	18:45:59	She had to divert, was in a rush to get home, and probably had her feet on the brake when she landed
02/17/2017	18:48:07	And she did 3 illegal approaches. Had to go missed twice. She didn't realize they were NOTAMed out
02/17/2017	18:49:13	No she diverted to Charleston after going missed twice and had a low fuel pressure indication. Mechanic came out. After it was fixed, she went back to Beckley and that's when she blew it
02/17/2017	18:49:33	Wow 😳 is she getting in trouble?
02/17/2017	18:51:26	Not sure. Chief pilot was not happy. The FAA is going to look over the report. It wouldn't have been so bad if it was just the tire but she did 3 approaches that were not authorized so that could get her
02/17/2017	18:51:53	I think they said worst case is she'll get a warning from the FAA
02/17/2017	18:53:02	Ehh I don't know. I wouldn't want a warning from the FAA lol
02/17/2017	18:54:30	Tire no big deal, but the approaches very big deal
02/17/2017	18:54:47	Exactly. Anything that has to do with the FAA is really bad
02/20/2017	21:56:44	[the captain] is back 😬 His # better not fall asleep again
02/20/2017	22:00:51	Captain just came back from vacation
02/20/2017	22:08:08	😬yep..it was so nice last week not having to worry if your captain's gonna fall sleep on you
02/20/2017	22:23:00	Dude but @, the other captain, told me last year, the chief pilot told him to come fly with [the captain] for a week
02/20/2017	22:23:57	Because when [the captain] was flying with him, he couldn't do the approach and had to go missed! So he sent @ out to assess him 😬
02/20/2017	22:26:18	He asked me if [the captain's] gotten any better and I'm like ummm..he can fly in VFR..lol

4.0 Friend #5

Date	Time (EST)	Message
01/14/2017	08:59:25	Did I tell you I thought I was going to die last week? Scariest # of my life lol
01/14/2017	09:03:34	No you didn't. I need to hear about this. But your gonna have to tell me later in the mountains again. It's starting to get spotty.
01/18/2017	22:17:12	You ready for my near death story??
01/18/2017	22:18:26	Yeah
01/18/2017	22:18:59	Is this gonna be a novel. Lol
01/18/2017	22:20:28	So I showed up to work that day and there was like a freakin blizzard outside. It was super windy, gusty, snow coming down like crazy
01/18/2017	22:21:18	So like a typical Tuesday
01/18/2017	22:21:20	Lol
01/18/2017	22:21:59	The snow eventually slowed down but it was still really windy. So we went to take off and when we went to bring the gear up, only the main lights went out. The nose was still indicating down and locked
01/18/2017	22:22:08	Ha! Pretty much.
01/18/2017	22:22:54	So [the captain] went to cycle it. Same thing. So I took the controls while I went to look through the QRH
01/18/2017	22:23:01	I meant he took the controls
01/18/2017	22:23:27	And he's calling ATC to tell them we might need to do a fly by
01/18/2017	22:23:51	Then all of a sudden we went into IMC and you know how we have all these hills around
01/18/2017	22:24:56	And [the captain] hates being in IMC so he immediately banks the plane to the right. Snow coming at us, couldn't see #..and he's doing 60 degrees of bank and we we're only at like 3000 feet or so
01/18/2017	22:25:30	Descending at almost 1000 fpm...so I'm like calling this out.
01/18/2017	22:26:08	And the entire time I'm like #, we're gonna hit that hill..it's gonna happen. We're gonna hit
01/18/2017	22:27:01	We were probably like 2/3 of the way into a full circle before we broke out and I swear I saw a black hole right underneath us
01/18/2017	22:28:05	So now we're looking all over for the airport and it was behind us so he started turning towards it but we went into IMC again!
01/18/2017	22:28:30	And dude, I could tell he was starting to get disoriented. Like we were nosediving for the ground
01/18/2017	22:29:28	You in a only text type environment right now because I would really like to call you about this one
01/18/2017	22:29:47	And I'm sitting there like yep it's over
01/18/2017	22:30:12	Let me get off..he's sitting right here
01/18/2017	22:30:22	Ok