

Docket No. SA-532

Exhibit No. 2-F

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Washington, D.C.

Operations/Human Performance Group Chairmen
Interview Summaries – New York

(12 Pages)

Attachment 5

to Operations / Human Performance Group Factual Report

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INTERVIEWS IN NEW YORK

Interview: Susan F. O'Donnell, First Officer (FO) - American Airlines

Interview date: January 16, 2009

Time: 1535

Location: Marriott Downtown, New York City, NY, via telephone

Present were: David Helson, David Tew, Katherine Wilson, Malcolm Brenner - National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB); Lori Cline – US Airways; Larry Rooney – US Airline Pilots Association (USAPA); Ricky Daniel – Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

First Officer O'Donnell was represented by Bennett Bogges - Allied Pilots Association (APA)

In the interview FO O'Donnell stated the following:

She was 51 years old. She was a pilot for American Airlines for 19 years. She was a first officer on the B-767. She had about 13,000 hours total time. She was typed in the B-757 and B-767. At American Airlines she had also flown the A300, F100 and 727 but was not typed in them.

FO O'Donnell was asked describe the accident flight. She said she was sitting in first class, in the last row aisle seat. She said shortly after takeoff, she heard several loud bangs, like "impacts". Her initial reaction was that they had hit another airplane. She said the engine appeared to quit. It seemed like one was working and one was not. She said the airplane started to turn left. She said it sounded like the left engine was compressor stalling. She said they turned left and then rolled out. She said they were not holding altitude. Passengers on the flight asked her if everything was ok. She told them that it seemed fine. She said the captain came on and told them to brace for impact. She said everyone braced. She said the flight attendants shouted "brace, brace, put your head down, stay down, stay down". She said it took quite awhile and it was a slow gentle glide. She could see out the window and what the altitude was. She braced at the last second and was surprised at how gentle it was. She said it was not what she had expected. She said the doors opened and the slides inflated. Flight attendants told passengers to "get out, get out". She got on a raft and was the fourth or fifth person off the airplane. She observed many passengers get out on the over wing exits. She said it was nice and dry but the airplane started sinking. Almost immediately the ferry boats showed up. She said it was quite difficult to get the passengers out of the raft and up the ladder to the ferry boat. She said it worked perfectly and everyone got safely on the boat. She said that was about it.

When she was asked if the engines stopped running, she said it sounded like the right engine "was not running". She heard bangs like the left engine was having compressor stalls. She heard noises and assumed the crew was trying to coax power out of the engine or something. She said apparently that did not work. She said it was hard to tell from just listening. She heard noises coming from the left side. She said the right side was silent.

When asked how long after takeoff did the bird strike occur, she said it was no more than five minutes. She said it was hard to say because she was not paying attention and was trying to go to sleep.

FO O'Donnell said she would not have any idea if the airplane was at the acceleration height. She did not even know what runway they took off from. She said she was not even looking and also did not have a window seat.

When asked if she recalled the flaps come up or any thrust reduction, she said she was not paying attention and could not tell us.

She stated she talked to the flight crew. She said she did not know the crew and had never met them before. FO O'Donnell was asked if anyone else was in the cockpit and she said there was another jump seater checking in.

She said the other jump seater was seated in coach and thought it was row 6.

FO O'Donnell said she heard banging, like compressor stalls. She said she heard the noise from the left engine, and said she heard it from the initial strike but did not remember if it ever stopped. She said once she heard "brace for impact" she stopped paying attention.

She said she had not flown other Airbuses besides the A300.

Her total time in the B-767 was about 5000 hours.

FO O'Donnell was asked about her interactions with the cockpit crew when she got on the airplane. She said the crew was friendly and accommodating. She asked the crew if it was ok for her to ride along. She said the crew introduced themselves as "Sully" and "Jeff". She said a seat opened up in first class and she sat there. She said the crew did not seem rushed and seemed alert.

She said she heard several bangs and that they happened all at once. She said the noise occurred on both sides. She did not recall engine power before that. She said it might have been normal because she did not recall anything. When asked about thrust, she said she was not paying attention at all. She was trying to go to sleep.

When asked when she heard the bangs if both engines quit running, she said she could not tell if it was immediate or shortly thereafter. She did not feel any sensation of yaw. She said the noise she heard from the left engine sounded like a compressor stall.

FO O'Donnell said she had experienced a compressor stall before. When asked if she heard any other noises like surging, she said no. She said there was no significant increase in power but was hoping there would be. When asked if she heard "bam bam bam" and then it got quiet, she said yes pretty much.

After the evacuation she talked to the crew but just to ask if they were hurt. She said the crew was off by themselves. She said the crew did not say anything in any detail. She said one crewmember said he thought it was geese. She said he told her “we were on them and how do you avoid them”. She said he did not mention anything about the engines. The FO told her that he thought it must have been geese.

She said she was finishing a trip and going home. She was sitting on the right side of the airplane. She thought her seat was 3D but was not positive.

When asked if she saw any smoke or flames, she said she could not see any part of the airplane from the aisle. She could not see the wings or the engines.

She said she had experienced a bird strike before. She said she did not see any birds and could not have from where she was sitting.

When asked if she smelled a fowl odor, she said “yes, I did smell that, that’s for sure”.

She said it was hard to say how much time passed between the brace call and touchdown but said it was maybe two minutes. She estimated the flight to be at about 2500 feet when the call was made.

She was not sure if the flight did a single engine taxi out.

When asked if she was the last jump seater on the flight or the 2nd to last, she said she was the last.

When asked if she saw maintenance around the airplane at the gate, she said no. She clarified that she was not the last person on the airplane and that several passengers boarded after her.

She said there were no PA announcements related to the incident prior to the brace call.

She said she had experienced a compressor stall on a B-727 and said that what she heard was not that loud. She said it was just her impression of what she heard.

When asked if the initial impact of the bird strikes was consistent with her experiences in the past, she said this was “worse, bigger, louder”.

She did not recall any pitching over of the airplane at thrust reduction altitude. She did not recall if the power settings were the same until impact.

She said she was within the first 10 passengers off. She said there were 12 passengers in first class. She said after they hit the water, the flight attendants opened the door and the slides blew. The passengers got out. She did not see the pilots. She said she exited from the right side.

When asked if she felt anything unusual before impact, she said she did not.

When asked if she saw anything on the wings, she said the engines were under the water but she could see the wings. She did not think to look but she did not see anything.

When asked about her interactions with the crew as she boarded the flight and what they were doing, she said they were talking with the first jump seater who was requesting permission to jump seat. She said she waited until he introduced himself. She introduced herself to the crew and asked if they minded if she rode jump seat. They said it was ok and introduced themselves. The crew told her to sit in the back if a seat was available. She said someone came and told her that there was a seat in the back. She grabbed her stuff and went back.

When asked how she knew that the crew was alert, she said she did not know but they seemed “perfectly alert”.

When asked how the crew got along with each other, she said they were both friendly but she did not really see them interact. She said the captain introduced her to the FO and she shook his hand.

She said she saw the flight crew after the accident and they were in the other raft on the other side of the airplane. She then saw them later when they showed up at the same facility.

She said she only talked to the captain briefly and he asked if she was ok. She told him she was fine and had no injuries. She thanked him for doing such a great job. She said he seemed to be holding up real well under the circumstances. He was concerned for everyone and was checking with the passengers. She said he double checked the passenger count. She said he had the right mind to bring the log book out of the airplane.

When asked about speaking with the FO, she said they did so around the coffee pot. She said she ran in to him. He said hello and asked her how she was. She said he was just making sure everyone was ok first thing. She said they chatted briefly about the incident. She said the coffee pot was in the terminal where they had them waiting. It was clarified that this interaction occurred a couple of hours after the accident. When asked if the FO specifically said Canadian geese, she said he just said geese and not a specific type. She said he “seemed good”.

She could not think of anything else for us to ask her about.

She did not notice any smell or odor and did not notice any temperature or pressurization change after the bird strike.

When asked if the crew got off after all of the passengers were off, she said she could not see the other side of the airplane so was not sure.

The interview ended at 1610.

Interview: Derek M. Alter, First Officer (FO) - Colgan Air

Interview date: January 16, 2009

Time: 1300

Location: Marriott Downtown, New York City, NY, via telephone

Present were: David Helson, David Tew, Katherine Wilson, Malcolm Brenner - National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB); Lori Cline – US Airways; Larry Rooney – US Airline Pilots Association (USAPA); Ricky Daniel – Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

First Officer Alter was represented by Captain Richard Alter - US Airways

During the interview, First Officer Alter stated the following information:

He was 25 years old. He worked at Colgan Air as a First Officer on the Beech 1900. He was hired at Colgan Air on May 21, 2008, and had logged about 900 hours total time. He said about half of his total time was in the BE-1900 and the other half was general aviation flying. He said he did not have time in a jet aircraft.

He said he was already asleep when the event occurred. He awoke to a noise that he said was different; he had not heard that noise before. He said there was “kind of a jolt” and the guy sitting next to him said that he had seen birds go past the window. He said he was in uniform and people started to ask him if everything was okay. He told them yes and they would probably turn around and go back to LGA. He said he did not realize that the engines had been struck, or supposedly been struck.

He said the airplane immediately started into a left hand turn and was descending. He said they were low over the river. He said about 30 seconds prior to impact he heard an announcement that said something like “prepare” or “brace” he thought. He said he then heard the Flight Attendants yelling something like “heads down, brace” but he was not sure exactly what they said.

FO Alter said when they touched down; he thought it was a “phenomenal landing” and that he had never experienced a landing that good on a runway. He said after touchdown, the airplane came to a stop quickly. He said there was a blank part in his mind. He said the doors popped opened, he remembered getting out of the airplane and remembered the flight attendants directing people. He said after that it was kind of vague. The ferries came over and helped out.

He said he was seated in seat 6E on the right side.

He said the noise sounded like a pop or maybe a popping sound like two pieces of two by four hitting each other. He said it was like a smacking sound. He said he did not really hear two pops but just one pop.

He said he was more awakened by the movement rather than the noise. He said there was also a smell which he assumed to be bird feathers but he was not sure since he had not smelled that before.

FO Alter said the movement initially was “like air brakes”. He said at first it felt like they slowed down real fast and the airplane went side to side. He said there might have been some yawing but he was not 100% sure. He said he did not hear anything else after the initial noise.

He did not recall hearing any thrust or engine noises after the initial pop. He said it “seemed pretty quiet”.

When he boarded the flight he said everything seemed normal to him, there was the normal Flight Attendant briefing. He said he was originally supposed to be sitting in the flight deck jumpseat but he got the last seat in the back. He did not notice anything abnormal, he had been on “thousands of flights” growing up in an airline family.

He said he initially showed his credentials to the lead Flight Attendant, who he thought was Donna, and asked to speak with the captain. He introduced himself to the captain and first officer and was preparing to sit up front. He said there was also another commuter, Susan from American Airlines. He was offered a seat in first class but gave it to her since he was the junior pilot. Then he said there was one more seat in the back. He said he left his bag and coat up front and thanked the flight crew for the ride.

FO Alter said he had not met the captain or first officer before and that they were definitely alert and not rushed. He said they seemed to interact well and that they were not rushed, they each even went to use the lavatory.

He said he did not hear any abnormal engine noise and that he thought the Airbus had “pretty quiet” engines. He did not hear anything super abnormal after the initial popping.

FO Alter said he was on the same raft with the two pilots and the flight attendant Donna. He stated that afterward, the captain told him and the other jumpseater that they should all stay together and avoid the media. He said they went to the hospital and then to the hotel together.

During the evacuation, he said he had helped hold the raft and had helped an elderly lady. He said the captain and first officer thanked him for providing that help but other than that he said he did not talk with the pilots much.

He said there was an exit 3 or 4 rows behind him that may have been faster, a lady asked him where he got his life vest and he gave her one. He did not see the pilots until they

were on the raft. He said everyone got out pretty quick, he estimated 1 to 1 ½ minutes. There was not as much pandemonium as he would have thought.

FO Alter said the pilots were the last to get on to the rafts. The crew was calm and the whole raft was calm. He said he was making calls on his cell phone and people were asking him if they could use his phone. People were holding the rafts up against the airplane to stabilize them and waiting to be rescued.

He did not hear engine noises before the jolt because he was asleep. He said the sudden jolt had thrown him forward and it felt like a “massive airspeed halt”. He said he had never heard a compressor stall before. After the pop, nothing seemed different. He was not listening for engines, and nothing jumped out at him to indicate engines were on or off. The yaw was like someone was “dancing on the rudder pedals”; it was very quick, less than one second. He did not recall if it was left then right but he felt the nose move around.

FO Alter said he had experienced a bird strike before. It was a seagull while he was flying the Beechcraft but it did not sound anything like this.

There was a definite smell. He thought it was birds because the guy next to him said he saw birds fly by the wing.

While they were holding on to the plane, the captain was talking with the ferry people. He said the captain told one of the passengers to be in charge of taking a head count of everyone on the raft. He said the captain went back onto the airplane and then came back out. He did not see him bring anything out. He was sitting on a different side of the raft than the captain and he did not say anything to him. He said there was no talk of what happened. He did not hear the FO say what he thought happened.

FO Alter said the authorities kept them together away from the rest of the passengers. He said he was with the accident crew “for hours”. He said the pilots were keeping really quiet and did not say much. He said he applauded them for what a great job they did and they were humble.

He said he heard someone say it was a bird strike but he could not recall when or who he heard it from. He said the popping noise, the jolt, and the yawing occurred simultaneously.

He said the flight had left a little late, maybe 15 minutes. He was on his way home and said he could fall asleep real easily. He said he closed his eyes just before they started the takeoff. The taxi was not long, only about 10 minutes at the most and he did not know if it was a single engine taxi or not.

He said when he heard the captain announcement he thought they were at 1,000 feet or less. Afterwards, he said he told Susan that the guy next to him had seen birds and she said she had heard it was a bird strike.

FO Alter said he looked outside after he heard the noise but could not see the engines or the wings except that he could see the tip of the right wing.

He said his father flew for US Airways.

He said he exited the airplane from the front left corner. He said he could not see the engines or the wings but could see the tips of the wings. There were people standing on the left wing and he could not see the right wing. He could not see any damage because the wings were submerged.

FO Alter said he had expected there to be more chaos. He said he did not know if it was because of the flight attendants, he had never been in a situation like this. To him it was miraculous how smooth it was. He said he could not believe how fast everyone got out. He said he did not know how US Airways trains their employees but from an outsider they did a phenomenal job.

The interview ended at 1715.

Interview: Serge Martel, Pilot - Air Canada Jazz

Interview date: January 17, 2009

Time: 1605

Location: Marriott Downtown, New York City, NY, via telephone

Present were: David Helson, David Tew, Katherine Wilson, Malcolm Brenner - National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB); Lori Cline – US Airways; Larry Rooney – US Airline Pilots Association (USAPA), Ricky Daniel – Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

During the interview, Mr. Martel stated the following information:

He was a captain for Air Canada Jazz flying the regional jets (RJ) 100, 200, and 700. He had worked for the company for 20 ½ years though the name of the company had changed several times. He flew the Dash 8 airplane for about 17 years. He had been on the RJ since 2005. His total flight time was about 17,000 flight hours.

He was flying into LaGuardia (LGA) on the afternoon of January 15, 2009. They had been cleared by the controller to descend to 4,000 feet on a heading. At 4,000 feet, he was cleared to fly direct to the LGA VOR. He was then given a clearance to fly a heading of 270 degrees for radar vectors for the Expressway Visual to runway 31 at LGA.

The controller then called and said to climb to 5,000 feet immediately. Captain Martel then said they were told to look for an A320 that they had lost radar contact with at about 200 feet above the river. He said he could not see the Airbus and was subsequently

cleared to climb to 6,000 feet and hold at DIALS intersection. They did about one and a half turns in the holding pattern before they were cleared for an expressway visual approach to runway 31 at LGA. As they descended through about 2,800 feet, they saw a flock of geese. The geese were about 100-200 feet above them at an altitude of about 2,900 to 3,000 feet headed in a southwest direction.

He had not heard anything previously about birds in the area. The birds had two colors and looked similar to Canada geese which were dark and grayish colors. He said there are white goose and Canada goose.

He did not hear any radio calls of "Mayday".

He did not recall what the DME [distance] was for DIALS intersection. The birds were located about 5 miles southwest of the DIALS intersection. He estimated there were about 20 birds and they were together but not in a definitive pattern. The birds were definitely not in a V pattern.

He estimated their size was about the same as one and a half to two ducks together. He saw them about 8-10 minutes after the Airbus had encountered birds.

He had been hit by 5 ducks when he was flying in the Montreal, Canada area. In Quebec City, when birds migrated in the Fall, there was always a warning put on ATIS. If you saw a flock near the airport, pilots would give out a PIREP (pilot reports) to warn the next pilot. They were pretty big. In the Fall it would be reasonable to expect them but he was not worried about them at LGA this time of year.

When he saw the group of birds, he was not afraid that he was going to hit them as they were headed away from the airport. The birds did not react to the airplane. He did not give a PIREP about the birds.

When at DIALS, the co-pilot could see the Airbus airplane in the water but he could not.

The interview ended at 1630.

Interview: Benjamin G. Davenport, Helicopter Tour Pilot - Liberty Helicopter Tours

Interview date: January 18, 2009

Time: 0905

Interview location: Marriott Downtown NYC, NY, via telephone

Present were: David Helson, David Tew, Katherine Wilson, Malcolm Brenner - National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB); Lori Cline – US Airways; Larry Rooney – US Airways Pilots Association (USAPA); Ricky Daniel – Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); Philippe Boscardin (BEA)

In the interview Mr. Davenport stated the following:

He had a total time of 1400 hours.

He was flying a tour. It was overall a quiet day and there were not too many tours. He was north bound over the Hudson at about 1,500 feet flying on the East bank of the Hudson. He was in contact with EWR tower then switched over to LGA tower.

He was told by LGA tower to look for an Airbus 320 by the GW (George Washington) Bridge, 5 miles north of his position, and to report when in sight.

He said he did not see him at that time. Later he did see him 2 miles out at about 800 feet. He turned right and the Airbus passed him off his left. He turned after the airplane hit the water. He did not see the landing but saw the splash.

He turned south. He did one loop around. He noticed rafts were already out. The controller then sent him on his way. He turned south again and went back to West 30th ST and landed.

He gave the position of the Airbus to LGA tower.

He said he did not notice any birds. He said there were always seagulls flying around. There are usually seagulls from the surface to 1,500. He did not see any large geese.

He said he did not notice anything unusual about the airplane it looked intact and he did not see any smoke. He did not recall the configuration the plane was in. He said it was a stabilized decent with some minor pitch adjustments.

He said he normally flew at 1,000 feet southbound and 1,500 feet northbound. Sometimes he dropped to 500 feet to see the statue of liberty and operating from 30th ST when climbing out and coming in. He said normally he did not fly higher but occasionally flew at 2,000 feet to clear the Empire State Building.

He did not hear the Airbus make any radio calls on the frequency but did hear some from helicopter 461SA who also gave tours. The other helicopter was further north than he was. He thought the other pilot saw the aircraft land in the water and reported to ATC that it was down in the Hudson. He did not hear anyone else report anything about birds

He said he saw the rafts and people on the wings. He did not see any smoke coming from the engines. He assumed that something had happened and they could not make it back to LGA.

He said the Airbus was about 700-800 feet below him and ½ mile away. The Airbus was below him the whole time. He said he did not hear any noise from the airplane but did not think he would have.

He thought the landing gear was extended but was not sure. He was not sure about the rest of the configuration. He said it seemed it was going slow and quite controlled so he assumed the flaps were extended. He was familiar with a RAT but could not say if he saw it. He stated he saw small pitch changes but the airplane was generally stable.

He did not hear any PIREPS about the birds and said if there were a high number of birds, pilots would usually report it.

He said he had 5 passengers on board and they asked if it was real or a training exercise. They said they were shocked to see it.

He was surprised at how fast the rafts were out and passengers were on the wings. He was surprised at how fast ferries were there. By the time he left LGA frequency, ferries were on the scene.

“That’s about it.”

The interview ended at 0922.

Interview: Tamera S. Fein, Helicopter Pilot - Manhattan Helicopter Tours

Interview date: January 18, 2009

Time: 1003

Location: Marriott Downtown NYC, NY, via telephone

Present were: David Helson, David Tew, Katherine Wilson, Malcolm Brenner - National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB); Lori Cline – US Airways; Larry Rooney – US Airways Pilots Association (USAPA); Ricky Daniel – Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); Philippe Boscardin (BEA)

In the interview Ms. Fein stated the following:

She had over 2,000 hours total time.

She said she started a tour from the Port Authority Downtown Manhattan Port Authority Heliport (JRB) at 1520, with six passengers onboard. She flew up Buttermilk Channel to the tip of Governor Island, turned right and climbed to 1,000 feet. She was talking to center on Common Traffic Advisory Frequency 123.05.

She said she then turned North bound toward the Intrepid located around 79th ST Boat Basin. She first saw the Airbus “all lit up” (with exterior lights) at 1,000 feet. The

Airbus was North East of the George Washington Bridge East Stanchion. She stated that when she was over the Intrepid flying northbound, he was northeast flying south.

She said she switched from frequency 123.05 to LaGuardia and heard LaGuardia pointing out the Airbus to another helicopter pilot flying N152TA. He said that he was looking for traffic. She said she then turned right towards Manhattan.

She heard LaGuardia transmitting that the Airbus was around 900 feet and there may be an incident. She said she rolled out of her turn and could see the Airbus descending south of the George Washington Bridge but then she said she lost sight of the Airbus as she approached the NY side of the Hudson.

She said she then flew up the north side of the river and that is when she saw the aircraft in the river and told ATC. She said she saw rafts deployed in the water. She said she flew a left 360° turn around the aircraft and noticed people on the wing and people in the water clinging to life preservers.

She believed the police helicopter or news helicopter, asked her over the radio her position and she responded she was over the Intrepid. She said LaGuardia then cleared her up to 2,000 feet to fly a 360° degree turn around Manhattan. She said she went back to the river and then descended back to 1,000 feet.

When asked about the initial position she restated that when she was flying north, the plane was northeast of her position heading south. She made a right 360° turn and he was on the Jersey side and she was on the New York side.

She stated her helicopter was above the Airbus at all times. She stated he was completely lit up, clean configuration: no landing gear or flaps. She stated the aircraft looked like a big glider. She stated she saw nothing from the engines; no engine exhaust or vapor trail and she did not see smoke. She noted that she saw nothing missing from aircraft

She saw no changes in pitch or roll. She stated the aircraft was pretty much straight and level the whole time, but descending.

She said she saw no birds, heard no reports of birds on ATC or PIREPS and she heard no distress calls. She stated probably why was because she was on frequency 123.05, and the aircraft would have been on another frequency like 121.5.

She stated that the helicopter itself had no video but she said the passengers on her flight had the entire event on video. She stated that N461SA was the only tour for that day.

She stated that she was less than two miles from the aircraft. She said “he did a great job”.

The interview ended at 1020.