

DOCKET NO. SA-516

APPENDIX 13

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT
FRANK MICHAEL SOODEEN
NOVEMBER 19, 1996
(40 pages)

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BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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In the Matter of: :
TWA FLIGHT 800 :
INTERVIEW OF :
FRANK MICHAEL SOODEEN :
- - - - - x

The above-entitled matter came on for interview, pursuant to Notice, before NORM WIEMEYER, NTSB Official, at JFK International Airport, Jamaica, NY, on Tuesday, November 19, 1996 at 12:30 p.m.

1 APPEARANCES:

2 TERRY STACEY, TWA

3 LU LIEBER, FBI

4 STEPHEN KLAPACH, FAA

5 CHARLES HALE, IAM

6 KEVIN LONGWELL, BOEING

7 DENNIS SANTIAGO, IAM

8 LOU BURNS, AIRLINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION

9 RICH KARNIEWICZ, FBI

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WITNESS

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FRANK MICHAEL SOODEEN

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WIEMEYER: I think we'll go ahead and get started. For the people in the group, the procedures will be as they were yesterday.

Please state your name and who you're with before you start asking your questions, so that the Court Reporter will have an opportunity to record it, so that each person is identified.

As usual, I'll start out and start out with the administrative stuff that we have to get out of the way.

Would you give us your full name and the spelling on your last name, please?

MR. SOODEEN: My name is Frank Michael Soodeen. That's S, as in Sam -- O-O-D, as in David -- E-E-N, as in --

MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. And what's your address?

MR. SOODEEN: My address is 123-35 82nd Road in Kew Gardens.

MR. WIEMEYER: And the Zip Code there?

MR. SOODEEN: 11415.

MR. WIEMEYER: And your phone number?

MR. SOODEEN: Area Code 718-793-9013.

MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. And who is your employer?

MR. SOODEEN: Right now, I'm employed with Triangle Aviation. I'm the Aircraft Maintenance Manager.

MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. And at the time of the accident

1 involving TWA Flight 800, was Triangle your employer --

2 MR. SOODEEN: Yes, sir.

3 MR. WIEMEYER: -- at that time?

4 MR. SOODEEN: Yes, sir.

5 MR. WIEMEYER: Now, what was your involvement with
6 TWA 800?

7 MR. SOODEEN: Well, my only involvement was visual,
8 when I saw an aircraft -- before the crash -- early afternoon
9 -- I'm sorry -- late afternoon, early evening.

10 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. So you didn't --

11 MR. SOODEEN: I saw it on that one occasion, you
12 know, because I go by, I drive by the area --

13 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. So you had no official
14 duties --

15 MR. SOODEEN: No.

16 MR. WIEMEYER: -- with regards to that --

17 MR. SOODEEN: Anything whatsoever.

18 MR. WIEMEYER: I understand that you have a statement
19 that you would like to make. Why don't you proceed with that
20 at this time?

21 MR. SOODEEN: Okay. I have a copy of a statement I
22 made for the FBI. I'll let each and every one -- look it over.

23 And first you must understand why I wrote this this
24 way. I made this statement to the FBI way back -- Well, I
25 called the FAA about a week after the crash. I was trying to

1 reach one inspector in particular, Mr. Rudy -- and he was not
2 available, so I called and called again, and I spoke to him
3 finally and he told me he had nothing to do with the
4 investigation, the NTSB. I said, "Well, I thought the FAA and
5 the NTSB was -- you know -- one and the same." I thought so at
6 the time, okay? So -- and he put it straight, said, "No, they
7 are different."

8 So he put it onto the FBI. A few agents called me
9 the same day. Agent -- and another agent. I invited them over
10 to my office. They came and I made a statement, complete --
11 you know -- exactly what I saw. 8/5

12 At this point in time, they advised me not to discuss
13 this with anyone. They told me, "Don't discuss this," and I
14 spoke to them a few times after that, and he told me -- "I hope
15 you haven't discussed this with anyone." I said, "No, you told
16 me not to. I'm not doing this." I mean, I know -- I mean,
17 that's --

18 So eventually after about a few -- about a month and
19 a half, again, nobody called me, nobody said anything. I
20 listened to all the stupid reports about whatever, you know,
21 and -- you know -- not one thing of this was mentioned. So I
22 said, "Okay." I called him again, and he said, "Oh, we are not
23 -- we are not handling the case anymore." So he referred me to
24 another agent from -- Scott Metcalf was, I think, his name.

25 So he came with another agent, and I told him -- I

1 gave him the whole story all over again -- all over again, and
2 a few weeks after I called him -- and he called me back a
3 couple more times for more information, and -- but the way he
4 was sounding as though I didn't -- this information is no good
5 you know -- but, you know, "Just don't say ^{anything} nothing to nobody,
6 but it's no good."

7 So, eventually, I said, "No, let me speak to someone
8 from the NTSB, the guys who are really investigating and who
9 are familiar with airplanes and know what they are talking
10 about." He said, "No, I don't think that will ever happen" --
11 his exact words, quoting him. "That will never happen."

12 So, eventually, I said, "Look -- you know -- this is
13 ridiculous." So I went back to the FAA again. I guess this is
14 how this meeting's coming about now.

15 Okay -- report -- the way I wrote it is because in my
16 mind and my wife's mind, I got information that -- you know --
17 very dangerous. That's the way I look at it, and the FBI
18 didn't want nobody to know, hey, you know, they could have
19 bumped me off to keep me shut up, you know. This is the way --
20 you know -- we think sometimes. If I know something and you
21 don't want me to know, you're the FBI -- you know -- that's
22 possible.

23 So this is the way the report was written. So I hope
24 everybody could just read it and -- copies for everybody --
25 take a couple of minutes -- got just about everything there. I

1 think that's six or seven copies.

2 (Pause.)

3 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. I'm going to make this -- made
4 part of the record and I would like to have you sign it.

5 MR. SOODEEN: I signed on here on the back.

6 MR. WIEMEYER: Yes.

7 MR. SOODEEN: You want me to sign again?

8 MR. WIEMEYER: Original signature, right.

9 (Document above referred to was
10 marked for identification as
11 Agency Exhibit 1.)

12 MR. WIEMEYER: Yes, what let's do is proceed with
13 asking you some questions, and I'll continue with the questions
14 that I have, then we'll start around the table, and each person
15 has some questions -- identify themselves --

16 What is the function of the company that you work
17 for?

18 MR. SOODEEN: We do aircraft maintenance -- the
19 company -- My department, aircraft maintenance. We fix
20 airplanes -- we turn the plane around.

21 MR. WIEMEYER: Do you hold any FAA certificates --

22 MR. SOODEEN: Yes, I do -- plus FCC license.

23 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. Are you in AI?

24 MR. SOODEEN: Yes.

25 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay.

1 MR. SOODEEN: -- RII on 747 --

2 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. From the statements that you've
3 made here -- you observed this particular aircraft.

4 MR. SOODEEN: That particular aircraft, yes.

5 MR. WIEMEYER: Would you describe the circumstances
6 around that, how far away you were -- and that sort of thing?

7 MR. SOODEEN: Well, the aircraft was parked against a
8 fence against the auto shop. I don't know if you're familiar
9 with where the auto shop is -- right across -- and the roadway
10 is about -- from the first parking area there is about 50 or 60
11 feet, tops, to the roadway, but sometimes you're going by and
12 you have to wait and stand there until maybe airplanes cross or
13 whatever. So that's when I saw it the first time.

14 And on the way back -- I think I went -- I don't know
15 how long -- On the way back, I saw it again. I looked at it
16 again, and I said -- but to my mind, the plane was grounded.
17 When I see something like that or anybody sees something like
18 that, as a mechanic, you want to investigate it around the
19 airplane, first thing -- So I thought the plane was grounded
20 because it was the second day, no power units hooked up, no --
21 stairs, nothing. It was just sitting there.

22 MR. WIEMEYER: How did you come to the determination
23 that the airplane that you viewed was the airplane that was
24 used on Flight 800?

25 MR. SOODEEN: Okay. When I saw the airplane there, I

1 looked at the registration. Okay? I was looking at the
2 airplane, and as far as I can remember, there's either 11719 or
3 11917. The back of the plane was a different number
4 altogether, but I didn't pay too much mind to that at the time.

5 So about a week after that -- you know -- I've been
6 looking for that airplane, I looked -- Before I called -- made
7 any phone calls, I called -- you know -- I looked around for
8 the airplane, I looked around for the airplane. I've been
9 looking --

10 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. And about how far away were you
11 from this --

12 MR. SOODEEN: Oh, the road -- As I said, the airplane
13 stopped here -- airplane -- the wing -- about 8 or 10 feet from
14 the roadway -- on the roadway. See, that plane is here.
15 You're right here on the roadway.

16 MR. WIEMEYER: So --

17 MR. SOODEEN: That's not that far, really. I mean,
18 you could see -- airplane -- that close -- it was not far away.

19 MR. WIEMEYER: Several hundred feet or --

20 MR. SOODEEN: No, I don't -- Difficult to judge, you
21 know --

22 MR. WIEMEYER: Yes --

23 MR. SOODEEN: -- area like this, but like I said,
24 airplane -- the wing, the right wing maybe another 15 feet or
25 so until the roadway and that's all.

1 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. So you were just off of the
2 right wing --

3 MR. SOODEEN: Yes, just on the roadway. Just off the
4 aircraft. It's a highly visible area. It's highly visible in
5 the day --

6 MR. WIEMEYER: Now, in addition to what you have in
7 your written statement here, would you -- describe what you
8 viewed on the airplane?

9 MR. SOODEEN: Okay. What I saw on the airplane was
10 -- for me, in my mind was a distinctive break, a break in the
11 skin, the fuselage skin.

12 As you know, if there is one rivet loose on an
13 airplane, you'll see streaks, because the door seals and closed
14 properly, you see the -- skins coming out where the seal is not
15 sitting properly -- you know -- you see all the -- ^{Nicotin Stain} ~~skins~~ coming
16 out.

17 Well, this had a -- mark -- the trails of the streaks
18 -- length was anywhere between 3 and maybe 10 feet, the trails,
19 you know, the streaks.

20 The break itself was -- I'd say between 8 and 12
21 feet, maybe. You know, if you look at a plane, it's hard to
22 tell exactly if it's 2 feet or 10 feet or 6 feet, but I would
23 say no less than 8 feet and no more -- maybe no more than 12-15
24 feet -- the location where it was.

25 Now, you could see at once a break because there is

1 no -- ahead of the break. Everything else from that point on
2 in a straight line back -- you take a pencil and just mark it
3 off, like I drew in the paper.

4 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay.

5 MR. SOODEEN: So that -- to my mind -- to anybody's
6 mind, anyone who knows an airplane -- where there shouldn't be
7 a streak of any kind, shouldn't be a leakage of any kind,
8 especially up there in the fuselage, except where there's vent
9 air, as where you see the streaks, there shouldn't be anything
10 there, nothing --

11 MR. WIEMEYER: Is this something that you have
12 observed on another aircraft in the past?

13 MR. SOODEEN: Well, you observe it with -- you're
14 looking around there, people walk around and see a couple --
15 you know -- if you're looking for a door seal, that the pilots
16 have problems with pressurizing -- stewardesses said maybe the
17 door was leaking, that -- hear the sound of the air pressure,
18 you look for those things, you look for the streaks and you
19 look to see where it is. A rivet, you look around to the plane
20 -- a whole group of it, must be rivets. You know, all these
21 things will give you a clue as to -- if there is a -- you know
22 -- leak or something there.

23 MR. WIEMEYER: So you have seen this type of --

24 MR. SOODEEN: Oh, yes -- but not size and length or
25 whatever.

1 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. From your background and
2 experience, and assuming that this is a break in the seam,
3 would you think that there would be difficulty in getting the
4 aircraft pressurized?

5 MR. SOODEEN: It would be -- depends on how big --
6 you know -- the seam -- It's a rigid surface, and there's a
7 slight rip, if there's a crack or a break of some kind, you're
8 going to see nicotine stains or the air conditioning -- coming
9 out, but maybe it won't be that big a deal -- you know, it's
10 not flexing as much -- that's all you need. So it's a
11 possibility it might be, but maybe even -- maybe not -- a rigid
12 area. It's not like a rubberized seal, where it could open
13 wide or close or -- I mean, that was the problem if there is a
14 break, and then you know if the break was smaller -- or the
15 break was below and that was just like a strain on the skin.
16 So maybe not, or maybe you should feel something. There should
17 be some -- There should be some -- but not a great deal -- a
18 crack on the seam itself and that -- it's not flexing one inch
19 or three inches at a time or whatever.

20 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. And if you'd continue on now
21 with your verbal account. After you observed this, what was
22 the next action you took in this regard, in regard to this --
23 what you had observed?

24 MR. SOODEEN: Well, for the next -- You know, I saw
25 it, and I -- you know -- I said -- I found it strange. I just

1 -- you know -- more or less, and then the next day when I heard
2 about the crash, this still didn't even come to mind, you know,
3 because I jumped the band wagon like everybody else, bomb,
4 rocket, bomb, like everybody was saying. They saw streaks,
5 bombs, whatever.

6 And then it hit me. Then I thought about it. When I
7 thought about it was when -- especially when the nose of the
8 airplane -- Well, I thought about it. You know, I said, "Well,
9 I wonder if this is the plane I saw," and I said, "No, it
10 couldn't be. Somebody shot the plane down. The Arabs or
11 whoever was in the area, the U.S. military, whoever was in the
12 area," and jumped on it like everybody else, the plane was shot
13 down.

14 So -- But the big fact, in my mind, came was when
15 they found the nose. They say the nose was like here and the
16 rest of the plane was here. Okay? Then I started thinking
17 more and more, "Hey, you know, that's gotta be the nose broke
18 away," because -- there's a plane flying, there's an explosion
19 of a fuel tank or whatever -- "Okay. Okay. I'm jumping
20 behind. I'm going to stay back here -- " but the nose was -- I
21 mean -- and more and more information start coming to prove my
22 point is that -- the wire bundles, when they pull all the wire
23 bundles into one, to my mind, it showed that the nose broke
24 away and pulled all the wires. Of course, you know it starts
25 in the ~~engine~~^{E + E} compartment -- and tore all the wires with it.

1 Maybe it flipped over this way or went that way. I don't know.
2 I think they went this way, flipped over -- and, obviously, the
3 plane's flying with a big gaping hole now in the fuselage, four
4 engines still flying, the wing -- that plane, I'm sure, is
5 doing 400 miles an hour by then -- I mean, 450, whatever --
6 four engines flying, the incoming wind alone is going to whip ^{FIP}
7 everything to shreds.

8 So the FBI asked me, "What about the explosion?" I
9 said, "Oh, obviously a metal-to-metal -- live wire is being
10 pulled apart, what do you expect?" I said -- I keep telling
11 them, I said, "You know -- the nose of the airplane. Where was
12 the nose of the airplane compared to the rest of the airplane
13 that was flying?" I said, "A bomb or a rocket is not going to
14 take a -- you know -- like a can opener, just cut your nose off
15 and throw it here and then take the rest of the plane this
16 way." I said, "This is what I observed. This is my opinion,
17 and this is -- I am -- I'll stand by this, because this is what
18 I saw," and then more information come to -- and when I gave
19 them this information was before anything -- bomb or whatever,
20 you know, before anybody knew what -- before any testing was
21 done. I specifically -- ~~that man~~, there's no bomb. I said,
22 "Everybody jumped the gun. You read the report, everybody
23 jumped the gun, said it's a bomb, it's a missile. Ain't no
24 bomb or missile.

25 The plane broke apart. I cited them a couple of

1 examples of -- crash. Everybody said bomb. Who knows? Is it
2 a bomb? Are you sure? How about -- Pan Am ¹⁰³~~132~~? And what was
3 that that airplane just sitting right there, just like -- you
4 know -- So these are examples I gave them. I gave them the
5 example of the Boston -- the World Airways airplane in Boston
6 -- I said, "Is that impossible?" Then told them about the --
7 airplane in Hawaii -- just ripped apart. Is that impossible --
8 No, but it happened -- United airplane -- in Hawaii -- I said
9 this was an airplane -- opens. It opens -- It didn't open this
10 way -- I said -- this was ripped apart. I said -- you know --
11 these are the things in my mind now. This is what I'm
12 thinking, because I'm going through all these things that I
13 know about and I've read about and I've seen and putting
14 everything together.

15 Now, the mere fact is this airplane that I saw had a
16 break -- ~~an inch break~~. This break you're talking about is
17 visible from where I was and I could still see that between 8,
18 10, 12 feet maybe, you know, and very difficult to tell -- the
19 curve of the airplane -- you know -- how -- the length of the
20 break.

21 So -- I said, "Now, look, the bottom line is, I say,
22 you guys are wasting your time. You're wasting the money --
23 you're wasting taxpayers' money. You're wasting everything
24 looking for a fuel pump, fuel pump -- and all that garbage. I
25 said, "Forget it -- I give you this. I mean, I give you this

1 before you even tested for any sort of thing, bomb or missile
2 or whatever and you guys refused it. You keep refusing it." I
3 said, "Just ask yourself, 'What is that nose intact, doing back
4 here and the rest of the plane is all over there?' Fuel pump
5 explosion is going to take the whole -- everything forward.
6 It's not going to break the nose apart, throw it back here and
7 then -- the rest of the plane -- It busted up with the airflow
8 and impact."

9 But they were all worried that we had explosion. I
10 said, "Of course you would have explosion. You're talking
11 about live wires, some four live generators running, four
12 engines running at full power, ~~pick-up~~ ^{take off} power. Obviously, all
13 these wires that were being ripped apart, batteries -- in
14 there. I mean everything. You're talking metal-to-metal
15 crunching. You're talking about four engines that have their
16 fuel valves wide open in those engines. All of them are
17 transferring fuel."

18 "Oh, what do you mean transferring -- "

19 "Sure, the plane's taken off -- " I said, "The plane
20 has taken off, man. The plane's still on a climb."

21 "What are you talking about -- "

22 "You're wasting your time. You're wasting -- and
23 everybody who knows anything about it -- you know -- just makes
24 it a laughing face." I said, "Come on, I give you something.
25 Nothing to it."

1 He said, "Well, we looked at the material --

2 So I told Agent Metcalf, I said, "Look, weren't you
3 supposed to take this -- to Washington to test it? You just
4 looked at it and -- it doesn't seem like anything?" I said --
5 a test to see how long -- a test to see how -- the break was --
6 see if -- you know -- "

7 He said, "No, we looked at it. The experts looked at
8 it -- No, it's -- "

9 I said, "Even experts don't know everything. You, as
10 an FBI agent maybe know something. Somebody with --
11 experience, they know more than you. Maybe you might know more
12 than the guy who has experience."

13 So he just -- and said -- So I said, "Look, let me
14 speak to somebody in the NTSB who is doing the investigation,
15 who knows what I'm talking about."

16 He said, "No, I don't think that would ever happen."

17 I said, "Okay."

18 So I went to the FAA. I called one of the FAA
19 inspectors, Freddie -- and he -- this gentleman here. And, you
20 know, that's it. You know -- every time he calls -- "Did you
21 find anything else?" I said, "There's nothing left to find."
22 I said, "The simplest -- the simplest of things that everybody
23 seems to overlook -- " Well, not everybody. I don't mean you
24 guys. But to my mind, everybody seems to be overlooking one
25 thing -- the airplane by itself, with all them wires pulled

1 into one little bundle, sitting back here. The rest of the
2 airplane is all the way over there -- a rocket -- a bomb that
3 -- Look at the United in Hawaii, that whole right side ripped
4 apart. It knocked off No. 3 and 4 engines -- completely. The
5 plane landed. It was still able to land. You tell me -- a
6 bomb or -- a fuel pump explosion, some -- and obviously the
7 tanks all vented. I mean, there are enough fumes in there to
8 poison --

9 So I give him all this information, and -- you know
10 -- he did nothing with, and -- you know -- every time he calls
11 or I called him -- "Have you got something else that we should
12 look into it?" -- say, "Look, the simplest of all -- where was
13 the nose of that airplane -- "

14 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. I don't have any further
15 questions.

16 MR. STACEY: Terry Stacey with TWA, 747 Captain.
17 Approximately what station would you say this --

18 MR. SOODEEN: Well, I looked at -- Station 1000 -- I
19 looked at -- from the FBI -- Station 1000.

20 MR. STACEY: Are there any airplanes continuing to be
21 parked in that area?

22 MR. SOODEEN: Well, there are planes parked in that
23 area, but this one was parked in the area on that day, the day
24 I saw it.

25 MR. STACEY: Okay. did you observe an airplane there

1 yesterday?

2 MR. SOODEEN: Well -- Yes, just about every day,
3 there's -- As a matter of fact, I've been looking ever since --
4 I've been looking and searching. I've been looking and looking
5 at all the airplanes. I just -- I don't understand -- when I
6 saw this -- all right? -- said -- there are times when I should
7 look. If I'd wanted to -- say, "Hey, you know, what is that?"
8 -- you know, "Well, do something about it -- " I don't know. So
9 -- you know -- I've been going through this ever since I saw
10 it.

11 MR. STACEY: I understand.

12 MR. SOODEEN: All right. So, but there are planes
13 parked there just about every day, every day. And what I
14 notice over the weeks -- once I've been going through this
15 looking for these airplanes -- is that the airplanes I see
16 today, I won't see tomorrow, but I'll see the following day --

17 There's one particular airplane -- right now. One
18 particular. Now, I think it's 15303, 17303. I have the number
19 written in my office. Right behind -- top there's a -- I took
20 a picture of it -- I took a Polaroid shot of it --

21 MR. STACEY: Can we talk about 119?

22 MR. SOODEEN: Okay.

23 MALE SPEAKER: What was the number of the airplane
24 you saw yesterday?

25 MR. SOODEEN: The one I saw -- No, no, I didn't look

1 at a number yesterday. I'm just saying -- I don't look at the
2 numbers every day, now. I look at numbers -- I don't look for
3 numbers when I look for the -- I look for the airplane. I look
4 for the -- I may look at a number, but if it doesn't match the
5 one I saw that day, I just sort of dismissed it.

6 MR. STACEY: Just for clarification, so you don't
7 remember exactly the number of the airplane --

8 MR. SOODEEN: It was 11719 or 11917. That's as much
9 as I know -- 11719 or 11917. In other words, 11917 or 11719.
10 That's it.

11 MR. STACEY: Okay. I have no further --

12 MR. SOODEEN: And I've never seen an airplane to
13 match those numbers since.

14 MR. STACEY: Okay. Thanks --

15 MS. LIEBER: My name is Lu Lieber with the FBI.

16 Mr. Soodeen, what day did you see that aircraft
17 parked --

18 MR. SOODEEN: Okay. That was the same day of the
19 crash, July 17th.

20 MS. LIEBER: That was July 17th?

21 MR. SOODEEN: Yes, July 17th. Okay?

22 MS. LIEBER: What time of day did you see that
23 aircraft at?

24 MR. SOODEEN: Like I said, it was either late
25 afternoon, early evening, anywhere between three, maybe four,

1 five o'clock, around that time.

2 MS. LIEBER: Three, four --

3 MR. SOODEEN: Three, four, five o'clock. Somewhere
4 -- Like I said --

5 MS. LIEBER: You saw it parked.

6 MR. SOODEEN: Yes, parked against a fence, late
7 afternoon, early evening.

8 MS. LIEBER: On the 17th.

9 MR. SOODEEN: Yes.

10 MS. LIEBER: Okay.

11 MR. SOODEEN: And I know I saw it twice, but -- you
12 know, twice, I looked at it twice, not just once, because I go
13 by there a lot. I go -- You know, that's the road I use to go
14 back and forth. I know I looked at it twice.

15 MS. LIEBER: Okay. So that was on July 17th --

16 MR. SOODEEN: July 17th.

17 MS. LIEBER: -- on Wednesday, at around three, four
18 o'clock.

19 MR. SOODEEN: I don't know exactly what day it was.
20 I don't know -- I know it was the 17th, because on the same
21 night of the crash, I thought about it. I said, "I saw that
22 plane there today."

23 MS. LIEBER: Mr. Soodeen, you are aware that that
24 equipment was -- 17119 was Flight 881 that came in from Athens
25 and that arrived into Kennedy at approximately 4:30, 5 o'clock.

1 MR. SOODEEN: Well, as I said, I saw it early -- I'm
2 sorry -- late afternoon, early evening.

3 MS. LIEBER: On the 17th.

4 MR. SOODEEN: That's when I saw it, yes. I couldn't
5 believe -- I just said maybe three, four, five o'clock, I said
6 --

7 MS. LIEBER: Okay. Where did you observe that 747?

8 MR. SOODEEN: It was parked against the fence on the
9 TWA ramp area.

10 MS. LIEBER: Had you seen that equipment prior to the
11 17th --

12 MR. SOODEEN: I don't remember if I did, you know. I
13 don't think I did. All I know, I saw it twice. I know twice I
14 saw it. I don't know if I'd seen it before and see it again --

15 MS. LIEBER: You are certain that you saw 17119 on --

16 MR. SOODEEN: Yes, or 11917. I'm not too sure which
17 one it was.

18 MS. LIEBER: Okay. Between three and five o'clock.

19 MR. SOODEEN: Like I said, ma'am, you know, I'm just
20 saying three, four, five. I don't remember exactly what time
21 it was, but I knew it was either late afternoon --

22 MS. LIEBER: Um-hum.

23 MR. SOODEEN: -- or early evening. That's the best I
24 can tell you, three, four, five -- and it was late afternoon or
25 early evening, like I stated earlier. So at the time, I wasn't

1 looking at the time to say, "Hey, I'm looking at this -- I saw
2 this." I wasn't making that sort of notation in my mind. You
3 see things and then everything falls back when something
4 happens. You're walking down the street. You see an old lady
5 walking across the street and you thought what happened -- You
6 know, she's okay. Then you find out she got hit by a car, but
7 you go home and then you read it on the newspaper, now, you
8 said, "Oh, didn't I ~~saw~~^{see} that lady -- "

9 MS. LIEBER: But you cannot be absolutely certain,
10 though, that the -- that there was another 747 with a
11 registration number 17109 --

12 MR. SOODEEN: There was no zero. There was no zero.
13 I don't remember seeing a zero --

14 MS. LIEBER: What numbers exactly did you see?

15 MR. SOODEEN: It was either 11719 or 11917.

16 MS. LIEBER: Okay.

17 MR. SOODEEN: Because I didn't make a notation, but I
18 remember the 1s and the 7 and the 9. That I remember.

19 MS. LIEBER: Okay. Now, let me ask you this: You
20 just -- prior to -- when Terry had asked you a question, you
21 said that there was another one that you had a photograph of.

22 MR. SOODEEN: I do.

23 MS. LIEBER: What's that number?

24 MR. SOODEEN: That's -- Well, it's written on the
25 photograph, 17303 or 17305, something like that.

1 MS. LIEBER: And when did you see that?

2 MR. SOODEEN: A couple -- about a week ago, a week, a
3 week-and-a-half. I took a picture of it, because I knew, you
4 know, I knew that somebody with inexperience -- you know --
5 would ask me what a -- brake is or what a brake looks like --
6 Scott Metcalf, Agent Scott Metcalf, he's the one that told me -
7 - you know -- "If you see anything, make sure you take a
8 picture of it. Make sure you take a picture of this. Make
9 sure you take a picture of that." So I did, and I told him
10 about it. I told him I saw something that maybe is nothing,
11 but I took a picture anyway.

12 I also took pictures of nicotine stains to see what
13 it's like, took a picture of the -- valve to show what nicotine
14 stains look like from an airplane. Took a picture of a rivet,
15 one rivet on an airplane that -- So he asked me to do that, you
16 know, and I told him about it, too, so -- and I told him that I
17 have the pictures --

18 MS. LIEBER: Let me just assure you, though -- I just
19 want to assure you of one thing -- because you've indicated
20 that the FBI did nothing with the information that you
21 provided --

22 MR. SOODEEN: Well, as far as -- as far as I knew,
23 nothing -- nobody called me. I can't -- I have to keep calling
24 back and forth and back and forth, and when I finally asked
25 him, "Look, let me speak to somebody who's doing the

1 investigation. You guys -- " Maybe the FBI is no longer doing
2 it because it's no longer -- maybe in their minds it's not
3 criminal anymore. So -- "Let me speak to somebody."

4 He said, "No, that will never happen."

5 He called me today. He told me that, "Oh, we set you
6 up on -- " your blonde lady FBI agent there, but he didn't set
7 me up. I called the FAA. The FBI did nothing.

8 MS. LIEBER: Okay. Well, let me just --

9 MR. SOODEEN: Frankly speak^{ing}, they didn't do anything.

10 MS. LIEBER: Okay. But let me just say to you --

11 MR. SOODEEN: Far as I know.

12 MS. LIEBER: -- just so you are aware of it -- the
13 FBI did, in fact, act upon the information that you gave us.
14 Agent Metcalf and myself went out to the hanger. We had a
15 representative from Boeing who was there look at the area where
16 you said this thing existed. That was number one.

17 Number two, on all the information that you have
18 provided us, that you've given us, that information was looked
19 up.

20 Now, just because you were not contacted by the FBI
21 to explain to you how we conduct our investigations and what we
22 were doing does not mean that you were not, in fact -- that we
23 did not look at that information as very serious, because we
24 did --

25 MR. SOODEEN: I thought -- In my opinion -- Well, I'm

1 glad you told me this because my opinion, nothing was done
2 because I kept calling. I had to keep calling and I had to ask
3 -- The first agent I spoke with, I had to call him. He said,
4 "Well, you know, we're not handling that anymore."

5 I said, "Well, why didn't you put me onto somebody
6 who is?"

7 MS. LIEBER: Well --

8 MR. SOODEEN: -- Agent Metcalf.

9 MS. LIEBER: All right. Well, this sort of isn't the
10 forum for that, but originally when the accident occurred,
11 because of its location, it was handled by another office, by
12 another -- The New York office is handling the case right now.
13 So whatever information you were provided with regard to that
14 is the truth.

15 MR. SOODEEN: Okay.

16 MS. LIEBER: Okay. I have no further questions.

17 MR. KLAPACH: Steve Klapach from the FAA.

18 The problem I have, now, of course, I'm not familiar
19 with the ramp -- The plane came in as the 881 flight. Is that
20 correct? Came into a gate and it never moved. Now, is that
21 gate relevant to the automotive shop? They're different areas,
22 right?

23 MR. SOODEEN: Two different areas, correct.

24 MR. KLAPACH: So I think that -- if you're seeing the
25 plane by the automotive shop, and we have testimony already

1 that the plane never was moved from the gate where it arrived,
2 it would appear to me that it must have been another aircraft.

3 MR. SOODEEN: No, I don't think so.

4 MR. KLAPACH: Well --

5 MR. SOODEEN: I know I saw that plane against the
6 fence.

7 MR. KLAPACH: -- people had told me yesterday, the
8 mechanics, they worked on the plane. It arrived -- I don't
9 know what gate it was. What gate it was? 27. And it departed
10 from 27. It never -- It came in at -- they said 4:30 -- off
11 that gate.

12 MR. SOODEEN: That's where I saw the plane and that's
13 what I saw --

14 MR. KLAPACH: Okay.

15 MR. SOODEEN: -- because --

16 MR. KLAPACH: I want to tell you --

17 MR. SOODEEN: -- you know --

18 MR. WIEMEYER: Excuse me. May I interject something?

19 MR. KLAPACH: Yes.

20 MR. WIEMEYER: What we're looking for are remarks
21 aimed at questions to the person being interviewed. We're
22 going to see them in statements, please.

23 MR. KLAPACH: Okay. All right. Well, that's all I
24 have to say is that the -- as far as we know -- at least on
25 what the information we received, the plane arrived on 27 and

1 departed on 27.

2 MR. WIEMEYER: Please keep your remarks to questions
3 to the person being interviewed.

4 MR. KLAPACH: Okay. Is there any chance that you
5 could have made a mistake and seen a different number
6 aircraft --

7 MR. SOODEEN: No, no.

8 MR. KLAPACH: Okay. I have no questions.

9 MR. SOODEEN: Because if I did -- like I said, I see
10 something like this, this will be something so stupid for
11 somebody in the experience as I have to bring to the
12 authorities, knowing that the world thought a bomb exploded the
13 airplane. I mean, I'm not stupid --

14 MR. KLAPACH: No one said you are.

15 MR. SOODEEN: So bringing this information just like
16 little over a week, when I told the FAA -- I called and I said,
17 "Look, this is what I saw." I mean, so -- you know, I know
18 what I saw. I saw the plane and I specifically stated --
19 testing for bombs, I said, "Look, this plane -- no bomb on this
20 plane. This plane broke." Look at the dates we're talking
21 about here, not -- you know -- "Who knows. Maybe it might be a
22 bomb -- "

23 MR. WIEMEYER: Any further questions?

24 Off the record, yes.

25 (Brief recess.)

1 MR. WIEMEYER: We're back on the record.

2 Let's let everybody complete their questionings,
3 please, and then come back to that.

4 And I would like to remind all the participants,
5 please keep your remarks aimed at questions to the person --

6 MR. KLAPACH: And we're still off the record, right?

7 MR. WIEMEYER: No, we're not off the record now?

8 MR. SOODEEN: May I say something?

9 In case you're referring to the fact what I told the
10 first FBI agent, when I said -- when everything was so fresh in
11 my mind, I said, "Look, I know I saw the plane twice. I don't
12 know." And that day when I -- I don't know -- or whatever. I
13 saw it twice in one day, on two consecutive days. That's what
14 I told the -- I saw it twice. I'm not sure if I saw it twice
15 in one day or on two consecutive days to that airplane. So
16 that's -- But to my mind, I knew I saw that plane the same day
17 --

18 MR. KLAPACH: The only reason I was saying about --
19 when you were saying you were so sure -- because on the second
20 page, you have stated that 7, 8 or 9 --

21 MR. WIEMEYER: Off the record, please.

22 (Brief recess.)

23 MR. WIEMEYER: Back on the record.

24 MR. LONGWELL: Kevin Longwell. I'm with the Boeing
25 Company and I have no questions.

1 MR. SANTIAGO: Dennis Santiago. I'm with the
2 International Association of Machinists.

3 I just need a little clarification as far as where
4 you were driving. Were you driving on the road going the
5 direction of the IAB?

6 MR. SOODEEN: No, going away from the IAB.

7 MR. SANTIAGO: Going away from the IAB.

8 MR. SOODEEN: That's when I first saw it, yes.

9 MR. SANTIAGO: Okay. That's when you first saw it.

10 MR. SOODEEN: Yes.

11 MR. SANTIAGO: And you say --

12 MR. SOODEEN: -- was on the right side of the
13 airplane, the right -- The left side, I don't know what was
14 there. I don't know. The right side. I saw the right side of
15 the airplane --

16 MR. SANTIAGO: And you were coming from the direction
17 of the IAB --

18 MR. SOODEEN: Direction of the IAB going to -- Yes,
19 to British Airways --

20 MR. SANTIAGO: To British Airways. Okay. You were
21 going to British Airways.

22 When you saw the aircraft, you said the power was
23 off?

24 MR. SOODEEN: There was nothing on that. As far as I
25 know there is -- definitely was there. You know, it wasn't

1 like maybe being ready for the --

2 MR. SANTIAGO: It wasn't ready for the --

3 MR. SOODEEN: I don't know. See, I'm just saying I
4 saw the airplane, you know. It looked as though it was parked.

5 MR. SANTIAGO: It was parked? And was anybody
6 around?

7 MR. SOODEEN: Oh, I don't know. No, I don't think --
8 I don't know.

9 MR. SANTIAGO: The registration number that you saw,
10 from what part of the aircraft did you see it from the nose of
11 the aircraft or --

12 MR. SOODEEN: I think it's the nose I saw, the nose I
13 saw it, either 11719 or 11917.

14 MR. SANTIAGO: It was on -- was it on the fuselage
15 that you saw it?

16 MR. SOODEEN: Yes, it looks pretty high up, I think,
17 yes.

18 MR. SANTIAGO: Okay. So --

19 MR. SOODEEN: Not too far away from the -- Yes, what
20 I was looking at. Somewhere on the front there.

21 MR. SANTIAGO: Okay. I need clarification on this
22 stain that you saw and it was on the right-hand side --

23 MR. SOODEEN: The right-hand side yes.

24 MR. SANTIAGO: Was it going towards the crown area
25 where --

1 MR. SOODEEN: No, it was -- No, not all the way to
2 the top. It was like exactly more or less where I drew it,
3 right above the doors.

4 MR. SANTIAGO: Right above the doors, and it would
5 stop. It wouldn't go over the crown area?

6 MR. SOODEEN: I don't think it went over the crown,
7 no --

8 MR. SANTIAGO: It stopped a few feet before?

9 MR. SOODEEN: I wouldn't say a few feet, but it went
10 pretty high up.

11 MR. SANTIAGO: It went pretty high up?

12 MR. SOODEEN: High up, and the stains were like --
13 the streaks, you know, on a white airplane, you can see the
14 streaks plain as day --

15 MR. SANTIAGO: Now, as far as -- for a nicotine
16 stain?

17 MR. SOODEEN: It depends on the -- door seals, mostly
18 from the seals on the door, you know, you check -- I refer to
19 them as "nicotine stains," air conditioning, you know, the dirt
20 from the air conditioner will do the same thing, smoke,
21 whatever, do the same thing -- you know -- it will do the same
22 stain -- the same sort of stain.

23 MR. SANTIAGO: But, now, we're talking about a
24 different type of failure per se, because these are protruding
25 from the rivets, correct?

1 MR. SOODEEN: From the --

2 MR. SANTIAGO: Right. What you saw --

3 MR. SOODEEN: What I saw --

4 MR. SANTIAGO: -- what do you think it was?

5 MR. SOODEEN: What I saw -- What I saw is more or
6 less -- you know -- where the airplanes are -- one time -- I
7 don't know -- I'm not sure --

8 MR. SANTIAGO: Yes.

9 MR. SOODEEN: -- Station 1000, I'm not sure if both
10 parts are bolted on in that area or what, but what I saw was a
11 break -- what I term as a break in the seam, not the skin, the
12 seam. It wasn't damaged on the skin, because it was like a
13 straight line at the front, straight down the seam. All the
14 streaks were to the back, so it was a streak from the seam
15 itself, not from the skin.

16 MR. SANTIAGO: Okay. And in your opinion, how long
17 do you think a repair on this seam would take?

18 MR. SOODEEN: Oh, I don't think -- It might have been
19 -- If you had to repair that, you'd have to look somewhere
20 else, too. I don't think you should -- that's the problem.
21 Something caused it to break there --

22 MR. SANTIAGO: Right.

23 MR. SOODEEN: -- I think it would take months maybe,
24 not only to repair it, but to find out where -- to X-ray the
25 bottom part of the -- structure -- to find out what caused

1 that, that size of break. It's just not a rivet, no. You're
2 talking about six to eight feet. In my opinion, six to eight
3 feet or more.

4 MR. SANTIAGO: So, in your opinion, this would be
5 very extensive and very --

6 MR. SOODEEN: I think so. I think so. I think so.
7 Like I stated, it's -- maybe cost -- you know -- unbelievable
8 to you, Boeing, everybody.

9 MR. SANTIAGO: Right. And as a mechanic, you weren't
10 -- you didn't ask anybody if they'd even seen this --

11 MR. SOODEEN: No, I didn't. I saw the plane sitting
12 there -- TWA. Like I said, it bothers me now to know that --
13 that plane was -- And I try to figure out -- planes park up
14 there, I figure out -- Yes, you're going to back it off the
15 gate for another plane to come in -- through, sometimes, but,
16 you know, some back it off and it sits there for two, three
17 days. Sometimes a plane must sit there for two, three days in
18 that area. You got -- You know, after this, I've been looking
19 at the airplanes and I've seen planes sitting there from one or
20 two days at a time in that same parking area, same airplane.
21 So --

22 MR. SANTIAGO: But this would -- in your opinion, if
23 Triangle had an aircraft like this, would it be repaired
24 outside or would --

25 MR. SOODEEN: Oh, a repair like this? No, that --

1 MR. SANTIAGO: -- it go back to the hanger?

2 MR. SOODEEN: -- believe me, that will go straight to
3 a hanger.

4 MR. SANTIAGO: Okay.

5 MR. SOODEEN: That will go straight to a hanger or
6 maybe for structural repairs. That's -- you know -- that's --
7 If I had something like that, it wouldn't just sit -- Something
8 like that is -- Something else caused that to break in that
9 area, you know, so --

10 MR. SANTIAGO: Okay. I'm still not clear as far as
11 where you were when you drove by that aircraft.

12 MR. SOODEEN: On the roadway.

13 MR. SANTIAGO: No -- right in back of the garage,
14 correct?

15 MR. SOODEEN: The road runs around the garage. The
16 road comes around the garage and come down this way. This is
17 the garage. This is the garage, okay? This is the roadway.
18 Okay? This is the terminal. The plane was parked here. This
19 is where I remember seeing that airplane.

20 MR. SANTIAGO: Okay. No further questions. Thank
21 you very much.

22 MR. BURNS: I'm Lou Burns. I'm a TWA Captain, 747,
23 representing the Airline Pilots Association.

24 What time did you get off work that day?

25 MR. SOODEEN: Oh, maybe eight, nine o'clock.

1 MR. BURNS: Okay.

2 MR. SOODEEN: I'm the manager. I'm usually there
3 every day -- not too many people on duty, so sometimes I stay
4 late -- very late in the evening. Other evenings, I'm there --

5 MR. BURNS: When you saw this airplane, you're
6 reasonably certain there were no tugs attached to it, no
7 mechanics around it. It was just parked --

8 MR. SOODEEN: That I can't be 100 percent on that. I
9 don't remember that. I can't. I can't be -- You know, I could
10 say yes or no, but I don't. See, I was looking at the --
11 airplane. That's it.

12 MR. BURNS: Thank you. I have no further questions.

13 MR. WIEMEYER: Any followup questions?

14 What was your scheduled shift?

15 MR. SOODEEN: I have no schedule, sir. I come in in
16 the morning and I stay until -- you know -- just about -- I get
17 here about nine o'clock in the morning and I'm here until about
18 eight, nine o'clock, sometimes later, depends on what airplanes
19 we have.

20 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay.

21 MR. SOODEEN: Depends on how many flights or
22 whatever, if there's an airplane running late, depends how many
23 guys I have on duty or whatever, because -- come to push the
24 airplane, I do it myself or -- you know -- whatever has to be
25 done, I do it.

1 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. I think that's all the
2 questions we have for you, sir. Appreciate your cooperation in
3 coming and speaking with us.

4 MR. SOODEEN: I must make a statement, please, if you
5 don't mind.

6 MR. WIEMEYER: Certainly.

7 MR. SOODEEN: This -- you know -- like the FBI, the
8 NTSB, Boeing, everybody, you know, that have their own ideas or
9 whatever they think, "He's not telling the truth," or, "He's
10 trying something," but just remember the date when I brought
11 this forward. The date when I brought this forward. It's not
12 something I just developed like everybody on the street coming
13 up with a theory now. This was brought to the FAA -- first
14 call to the FAA -- about a week on this report --

15 MR. WIEMEYER: That's duly noted and taken as part of
16 your statement.

17 MR. SOODEEN: Thank you. Okay.

18 MR. WIEMEYER: Thank you very much.

19 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
20
21
22
23
24
25

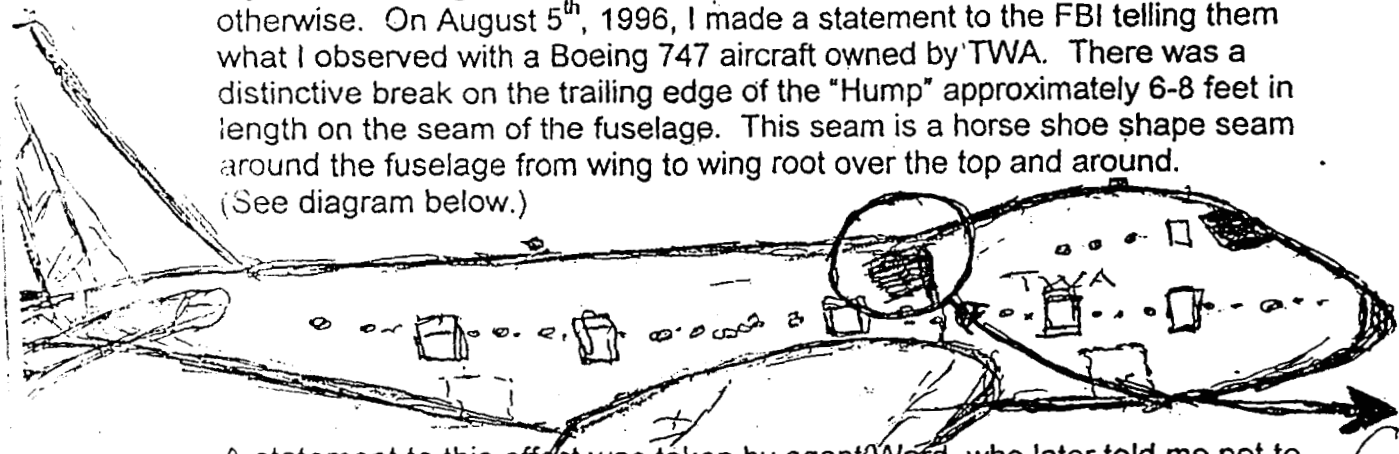
EXHIBIT #1
11/19/96 DM
FBI - Bureau, N. Y.

Frank M. Ford

August 5th, 1996

If you are reading this letter, it means that I am not around, accidental or otherwise. On August 5th, 1996, I made a statement to the FBI telling them what I observed with a Boeing 747 aircraft owned by TWA. There was a distinctive break on the trailing edge of the "Hump" approximately 6-8 feet in length on the seam of the fuselage. This seam is a horse shoe shape seam around the fuselage from wing to wing root over the top and around.

(See diagram below.)



A statement to this effect was taken by agent Ward, who later told me not to discuss my observation with anyone. I have complied with his request.

I do understand why this type of information could be disastrous to the economy and especially to TWA, TOWER AIR, and other airlines currently operating the 747-100 series aircraft. In addition to which it could prove embarrassing to the President of the United States, who, after the TWA incident, signed a law for sanctions of companies doing business with Iran and Libya.

BREAK WITH NICOTINE STAINS
Station 1000

Everyone jumped the gun claiming a bomb was on board, and pointed accusatory fingers at both Libya and Iran. If this information were to be publicly divulged, the onslaught of lawsuits citing negligence would be sufficient to paralyze the Airline, and subject the United States to global scrutiny with embarrassing consequences. The FAA would have no other recourse but to immediately ground ALL 747-100 series aircraft, which could fuel an economic catastrophe, since this particular aging aircraft is still operated by many Airlines. TOWER AIR'S entire fleet is comprised of 747-100 equipment.



I am convinced that this original 'jumbo' aircraft known as the 747-100 is beginning to break apart. Let's refer to a few examples.

1. The AIR INDIA aircraft, en route from Montreal to Heathrow, which went down in the Irish Sea. Everyone 'assumed' Sikh extremists planted a bomb which exploded at a certain altitude. In my opinion, this aircraft simply broke apart.
2. The PAN AM flight 103, which exploded over Lockerbie Scotland. Just review the similarities if you will, between that disaster, and that of TWA



Note: How easy it is for the Nose Plug to break off - even a DC 10!!!

800. Identical equipment. Same break in the forward section. Same sound on the flight recorder. Chillingly familiar.

3. The UNITED 747 over Hawaii. Same area breaking apart, except for a safe landing in this scenario.

Remember too, the BOEING 737 ALOHA AIRLINES aircraft where the seam behind the cockpit ripped open, resulting in the fatality of a flight attendant.

How many more aircraft must succumb to this design fatigue flaw before something is initiated to investigate and correct this phenomenon? These airplanes have been in operation for over twenty years, and most of them with distinguished service. However, while this is not an indictment of the 747-100, it should be a wake-up-call to design engineers at BOEING, the FAA, and other individuals and Government Agencies responsible for Airline Safety.

To the best of my knowledge, I am the only individual with this information, i.e. the eye witness to the TWA 747-100 aircraft which later operated as flight 800.

Since the feasibility of grounding ALL 747-100 aircraft by the FAA for D-checks and necessary repairs, is economically impossible, and the potential loss of revenue to an aircraft manufacturing giant like BOEING is not even negotiable, it is my concern that the FBI may consider me expendable. An insignificant 'minnow' in the powerfully lucrative ocean of Airline transportation.

I also believe that they have found the solutions, and resolved both the AIR INDIA, and PAN AM crashes, the kudos and rewards of which should be mine.

There is no way that the size of a bomb or explosive device, inconspicuous enough to be concealed on an aircraft, could bring down a 747. Let's refer to UNITED in Hawaii in 1987. That plane broke apart on the starboard (right) side, knocked out both numbers 3 & 4 engines, and despite that catastrophic loss, landed safely.

Therefore, with this information documented, which represents part of my security, I authorize the reader(s) to distribute, and sell to EVERY NEWSPAPER, EVERY TELEVISION STATION, EVERY FOREIGN LANGUAGE PUBLICATION, and ALL OTHER MEDIA SOURCES in this country, with all proceeds to my family.

Thank you for your friendship.

Frank Michael Soodeen

Frank Michael Soodeen
8/12/87

*9/11 - Refuse to meet with his Supervisor.
9/12 called ^{Mr} Knowlton*

*9/7 - Agent. Scott Meter
9/8 - Tel call. "
9/9 - tel call "
several calls in Oct
was suppose to
meet. 10/8 - No Show*