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**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

ATTACHMENT E

**PASSENGER AND OTHER WITNESS INTERVIEWS
(8 PAGES)**

BY: HENRY F. HUGHES

PASSENGER STATEMENT

Interviewed by
Lisa A. Kearns
July 09, 1996

Mr. Scott Harb

Seat 26A (rear overwing aircraft left)



31 year old, able-bodied male

STATEMENT.

As aircraft started moving down runway, he heard a "pop". He said it was "startling, but not frightening". Turned to look back in cabin and saw **02** masks (**one** or two sets) down about ten rows back **on** the other side. (aircraft right) Saw some dark **smoke** **in** cabin back there. Heard a series of seat belt buckles come undone and passengers yelling.

People immediately began **running** and screaming for him to open the emergency overwing exit. He opened it with the aircraft still moving approximately 20-30 mph. Weight of the door felt like a feather. No problem opening or exiting.

He opened the exit, leaned down to pick up his satchel, noticed the red emergency exit pathway lights had come **on** and saw the legs of other passengers waiting there to exit.

He is a frequent flyer and always tries to sit in emergency exit **row**. Had read **safety** information card upon boarding. Does not remember hearing any of the flight attendants' safety demos although he is certain they must have done **one**. He had his seat belt on and reported **no** trouble **getting** it off.

No flight attendant **on** this flight personally asked him anything about his Willingness or ability to sit in the exit row. He thinks flight attendants should individually **speak** with exit row passengers, explain the importance of the duties and give the passenger **some** criteria or guidelines under which exit should be opened. When the people were yelling at him to open the exit, he did not know if he should. He did not **know** if he should wait until the aircraft stops or not.

He said he knew **from** the information card he should set the exit **on** the seat **and not** throw it out. He stepped out onto the wing and was the first **one** out there. He **knew** he should go **off** the back side of the wing, but when he came out he saw **flames** coming from the left engine and decided to exit **off** the front of the wing. **He** immediately **turned** around to help others. **His** girlfriend had exited directly behind him and jumped **off** the wing before he could help her. She did not have shoes **on** and broke the heel of **her** foot in the jump.

The other passengers came out the window "frantically." **He** stayed at **the** bottom of the wing and helped people *off* until they stopped coming. **He** continued to **see smoke** and "dripping flames or metal" **from** the **left** engine.

He estimated between **2540** passengers exited. He did not **see** anyone exit down **the** L2 slide. He saw **the tail** slide blow away **after** it had been detached.

He said there was **some** panic in the back during the incident. It **was very loud** with a lot of people yelling. Said families had been broken up during boarding and that heightened concern.

He heard no **commands from** crewmembers, only yelling by passengers.

Once outside, he went around to the other side of aircraft and found a pilot out there who said he had hit full throttle and something popped. No other crewmembers outside. Flight attendant did put her head out door and Scott asked if his brother, Greg, who was still inside, could come back to the window. He did.

Said he was ~~thankful~~ he had read the safety information card. Felt he knew what do to, although he reiterated that he wished the flight attendants would have personally spoken to him before take **off** and given him some guidance about when to open exit.

He did not remember any elderly or disabled people on board. Just a "more than normal" number of children. It was the children who slowed his evacuation. He said he was concerned about them, and he did not want to leave the aircraft until he knew they were okay.

Said emergency crews on ground were "great." Estimated it took **20** to 30 minutes before the other passengers were deplaned **using** the portable stairs at the front passenger exit.

END

WITNESS STATEMENT

Ms. Darlene Boyd


*Interviewed by:
Lisa A. Kearns
July 10, 1996*

STATEMENT

Ms. Boyd was a passenger on board an Air Trans flight from Orlando to Knoxville, TN, on July 6, 1996 when she watched as a Delta plane landed at Orlando International Airport.

She was seated at the airplane window when she saw the Delta plane coming in to land and "fire was coming from the left engine with a lot of black smoke," she said. She said her husband also saw it.

The plane landed and soon after "the smoke quit" and the airplane continued its landing and rollout.

She said she did not report it to the flight attendant on her flight because she assumed the control tower had also seen it.

Said the fire and smoke lasted approximately **15-20** seconds. Said she could see the smoke on the left even though she was viewing the aircraft from the right side.

She could not identify the aircraft by tail number, but said it was landing at Orlando at approximately **0730-0745** on July 6, 1996.

WITNESS STATEMENT

Mr. Michael Logsdon



*Interviewed by:
Lisa A. Kearns
July 09, 1996*

STATEMENT

While driving down Langley Avenue he saw Delta flight #1288 sitting on **the** runway ready to take **off**. Says one engine, the left engine, looked lower than the other. He and his **son** pulled over to watch the plane take **off**.

He said something was not symmetrical with the other side.

The plane was at the end of the runway and he said he was positioned directly behind it. Left engine seemed to be hanging lower.

Watched airplane roll, saw the fire and flames in the front and shooting out the back. Looked like a rocket engine. Fire lasted only approximately **20** seconds. Smoke lasted approximately one minute.

Son also noticed that the left engine looked lower. Asked if there is something inside the back of the engine that expands when it is ready to take **off** and which may have made it look lower.

PASSENGER STATEMENT

Mr. Greg Harb
[REDACTED]

*Interviewed by
Lisa A. Kearns
July 09, 1996*

Seated in 19D (aisle - aircraft right)
Young, able bodied male

STATEMENT:

As the airplane was beginning to takeoff, he heard what sounded like "a flat tire." He turned to the back of the airplane and saw some smoke and a little debris. Saw a couple of the oxygen masks come down in the back.

Within moments, the plane was slowing down, people were getting up and the emergency window exits were being removed.

He got up, but did not move toward the exit. He said there were so many children on board, and he knew some of the parents had been separated from their children during boarding, so he was concerned about helping the children get offist.

He saw his brother exit out the overwing exit, so he was no longer womed.

He had heard no commands from crewmembers and said the back of the airplane was "frantic."

He then saw and heard a flight attendant as she came from the first class section with a megaphone. She told people to remain in their seats. By that time most of the people from Row 20 back had already evacuated the airplane out the back exits. He said some passengers may have evacuated after the first attendant made her announcement, but he could not be certain.

By the time of evacuation ended, all but one woman and the injured passengers had evacuated from Row 20 back. "I could see the injured in the back as plain as day," he said.

Once the flight attendants told the passengers to remain in their seats, the people in the front sat down again. He said "people started calming down." He said he did not believe the people from Row 19 forward knew the severity of the situation at that One.

Some passengers, at least one woman, said she still wanted to get off. Her children had apparently evacuated and she wanted to join them. He believes she was allowed to exit out the overwing exit.

One pilot and the flight attendants were trying to help the injured passengers in the back, requesting blankets and medical assistance. A pediatrician volunteered her services and went to the back. The rest of the passengers remained calm "and extremely respectful for what was happening in the back." He said passengers kept looking back, but another man stood in the aisle near the back so the passengers could not see clearly when the dead and injured were removed, although the passengers were still onboard when the bodies were removed.

Crewmembers or emergency personnel would occasionally come to the front to update the passengers. The pilot, who Harb said "took charge quickly," said it would be

more dangerous for the passengers to go out on the wing then to remain on the airplane since "everything was turned off."

Harb's bother, Scott, who had evacuated off an overwing, yelled to a flight attendant inside if his brother could come to the window. He went back to the exit at Row **24**, but did not exit.

When the doctor returned from the back, she told the passengers that *two* people were dead and one critically hurt.

It was approximately **20** minutes before useable portable stairs were brought **to** the front of the aircraft and the passengers deplaned. Harb say a first set of stairs brought earlier, but they did not fit. He watched as they tried to position them. He **also** watched as the medical helicopter amved.

There was some discussion about having the remaining passengers **exit out** the back and down the aft stairs. They discussed putting blankets down over the area, **but a** flight attendant or MET said "there **is an awful** lot of blood back there" and the idea was abandoned.

Two or three times after the emergency crews arrived inside the airplane, one **of** them came forward to ask if anyone in the front was hurt. They were not.

END

PASSENGER STATEMENT

Ms. Jacynth Oliver
[REDACTED]

Interviewed by:
Lisa A. Kearns
July 09, 1996

Seated in Row **26** Seat **B** - Center seat - in rear emergency overwing exit row aircraft **left**
25 year old able-bodied female, graduate student

STATEMENT:

She heard a loud "boom" and turned to the right to look back. Within seconds she saw smoke in the back of the cabin which she described as "brown and dark but not black." Immediately after the noise, she saw a man near her take **off** his seat belt. Passengers started yelling to hurry up and get the door open. The man **next** to her at the exit opened the door as the aircraft was still moving. He laid it **on** the seat as she stood up. He looked out and saw flames so he went off the front of the wing and she followed him off. He turned around to help her, but she did not wait and jumped off.

She had taken off her shoes prior to the take off roll, so she jumped **off** with just her socks **on** and broke the heel of her foot. **Also** reported suffering scrapes on her ankles and elbow.

She did not stay near the aircraft because she was afraid it would blow up and she was injured so she went over to a grassy area.

During the incident she heard **no** commands or announcements from any crewmembers. She said a friend, who was seated farther up, later told her a flight attendant with a megaphone told the passengers up front to stay **on** the airplane.

She estimated the number of passengers who evacuated out the windows **on** her side at approximately **30-40** people.

She did not know how many people were hurt inside but saw one woman **exit** who she described as the wife of the man in the back who suffered broken **legs** in the incident and she was covered in blood and hysterical. **Also** saw the **little girl** whose ~~mother and~~ brother were killed in the accident. The girl evacuated out the window.

Once out of the aircraft, Oliver said she looked back and saw smoke around the engine. She estimates she **was** out of the aircraft **about one** minute after the noise.

As the man was opening the exit next to her, she gathered up her shoes and her purse and went out the window with them in hand. She said she noticed "everyone **was** picking up stuff." Said it did not slow her evacuation because she was **so afraid the** airplane was going to explode.

She said she had received no special exit row briefing **on** this flight. She **flies** three **or** four times a year. She said the man next to her did not know under what **circumstances** he should open the door. Said everyone was yelling at him to open the door even when the plane was still moving but he was uncertain if he would be blamed. She suggested the criteria for opening the door be printed **on** the safety **information** card,

People in back of airplane began to yell immediately after noise. She said there was a lot of confusion because families had been split up during boarding and many were not sitting together. In some cases, some members of the family got off during the evacuation and some did not.

As people were yelling, the back of the airplane was in "a panic" to get the door open. Once the door was open, she had no trouble getting out. Did not notice any ice on the wing or anything else which slowed her evacuation

Rescue people arrived within approximately 5 minutes and set up a blue tarp to help the injured, She went to the tarp. She did not initially want to go to hospital, but was convinced to do so by the emergency crews.

She estimated it took approximately 20 minutes for the portable stairs to be brought to the aircraft and the remaining passengers taken off the airplane.

She said she had her seat belt on during the take-off, but immediately after the noise, heard approximately 30 belts open immediately while the airplane was still rolling.

Oliver said she did not read the safety information card but does when she is actually sitting next to the exit. (She was seated in the exit row on this flight, but not directly next to the exit.) Said she believes flight attendants "should actually go up to the people sitting here and say 'Do you understand how important the duties are here?' Not just ask them if they are capable of opening the exit."

END