

DOCKET NO. SA-516

APPENDIX R

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC**

**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT
NYANG MAJ. C. DAVID RUVOLA
JANUARY 11, 1997
(19 pages)**

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BEFORE THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20594

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IN THE MATTER OF TWA FLIGHT :
800; INTERVIEW OF: :
MAJ. C. DAVID RUVOLA. :
- - - - - X

TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

The above entitled matter came on for interview pursuant to notice before NORM WIEMEYER, NTSB Official, at the New York Air National Facilities in Westhampton Beach, New York, on January 11, 1997.

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APPEARANCES:

NORM WIEMEYER

NTSB Official

TERRY STACEY

Trans World Airlines Representative

LOU BURNS

Air Line Pilots Association

SCOTT METCALF

Federal Bureau of Investigation

AL CLEMENS

Federal Aviation Administration

I N D E X

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WITNESS:

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C. DAVID RUVOLA/Pilot, H-60 Helicopter, New York Air
National Guard.

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(Tape 1, Side B, second interview.)

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(No exhibits were presented or accepted into evidence
at or as a result of this interview.)

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. We're back on the
3 record. And at the present time we're interviewing
4 Dave Ruvola. And, Mr. Rolava (sic) would please state
5 your full name and spell your last name.

6 MAJ. RUVOLA: Okay. My name is actually it's
7 C. David Ruvola, R-U-V-O-L-A -- C is for Christopher.

8 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. And you are attached to
9 the New York Air National Guard.

10 MAJ. RUVOLA: I am.

11 MR. WIEMEYER: At the Westhampton Beach --

12 MAJ. RUVOLA: Yes.

13 MR. WIEMEYER: -- Facility?

14 What was your role with regards to the events
15 surrounding the TWA accident?

16 MAJ. RUVOLA: My role initially was to be
17 called in to fly the SAR -- search and rescue -- of the
18 victims of TWA Flight 800. And I was to come in at
19 3:00 o'clock in the morning after the accident took
20 place.

21 However, when I got here we were stood down
22 and we were -- basically been regulated to fly the FD
23 -- FBI and the NTSB to and from the meetings and the
24 press conferences, and the like, for the duration of
25 the investigation; approximately about a month or so.

1 My closest contact with anyone who was an
2 eyewitness came with Chris Baur -- Capt. Baur, who knew
3 of my interest in the area of side business at home in
4 hypnosis. And he was having problems with a dream, and
5 he approached me. And I was -- offered my services to
6 help him out if I can help him in any way, shape or
7 form.

8 He did come to my house one evening. And I
9 used a -- a regression technique to bring him back to
10 the scene in his mind's eye of what took place on that
11 evening. And we spent approximately an hour together.

12 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. For the purposes of
13 clarification, you're a helicopter pilot with the
14 Guard?

15 MAJ. RUVOLA: Yes.

16 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. And would you give us
17 your training and background qualifications as a
18 hypnotist, please?

19 MAJ. RUVOLA: Yes. I began -- it -- I had an
20 interest in hypnosis always since I was in high school
21 and I took a few courses. I guess beginning in 1992,
22 through the National Guild of Hypnotists, a basic
23 hypno-therapy certification program, along with later
24 on what they called an advanced clinical hypno-therapy
25 certification.

1 I then began a -- a very, very small part-
2 time business in it. And I didn't continue beyond a
3 month when I realized that I needed to expand my
4 education and knowledge in this area, because I had
5 people -- clients coming to me for items that were --
6 it seemed very superficial: smoking, stress, weight
7 loss; things of that sort -- and they began to express
8 and divulge quite a bit more than I had anticipated.

9 I felt myself not qualified to hear these
10 things when I was -- my background was very minimal, as
11 far as official training -- or in formal training for
12 this.

13 So, I then enrolled in a 14-month long
14 correspondence course that I completed and received a
15 Master's Degree in. It's a college in Louisiana called
16 St. John's University. It is not a regionally
17 accredited university. But it did give me much more
18 background and -- and confidence in myself as far as
19 performing hypnosis.

20 MR. WIEMEYER: To act as a hypnosis in the
21 State of New York are you required to have any kind of
22 a license or --

23 MAJ. RUVOLA: No, you're not.

24 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. And then, you do run
25 this business -- well, still on a part-time basis?

1 MAJ. RUVOLA: Yes, I do, but on a very
2 minimal basis. My -- most of my clients now are really
3 on a volunteer-type basis, and I'm not even charging
4 anyone. But I -- in the future I hope that when I have
5 more time I'll pursue it more readily.

6 MR. WIEMEYER: During the interview with
7 Chris Baur we discussed his being hypnotized by you,
8 and that's one of the reasons that we wanted to talk to
9 you.

10 Would you expand on what took place during
11 the -- the session with Chris Baur, please?

12 MAJ. RUVOLA: Yes. He came in and I used a
13 -- what's called a progressive relaxation type thing to
14 relax him. I then took him on a guided visualization
15 to relax him mentally. And I then used a technique to
16 help him recall in his mind's eye what he saw that
17 evening.

18 The technique that I used that particular
19 evening -- I believe I used a -- the analogy of an old-
20 time movie theater -- an old-time movie show; whereby
21 the picture frames would click, or stop -- like a
22 Charlie Chaplin-type of thing. And I asked him, if he
23 could, to go and stop at each frame from what he saw
24 and continue on until impact.

25 The exact words and details I don't have.

1 But the general overview would be that he saw
2 something. He described it. And there was some kind
3 of an impact and an explosion. And a secondary
4 explosion. And he became extremely emotional when we
5 got back to that point of the actual impact, and what
6 he had seen prior to it.

7 He described a sparkler type of thing. A
8 high white-pitch glow impacting, and then an explosion
9 and then a secondary explosion. And, of course,
10 falling debris and -- and a very large flame falling
11 towards the ocean.

12 MR. WIEMEYER: Chris Baur's shared with us
13 that he -- that you made a tape of that session -- or
14 he did. Or there was --

15 MAJ. RUVOLA: No, I --

16 MR. WIEMEYER: -- a tape made of the --

17 MAJ. RUVOLA: -- I always make a tape of
18 the --

19 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay.

20 MAJ. RUVOLA: -- of the sessions.

21 MR. WIEMEYER: And he has offered to share
22 that tape with us this afternoon, so I won't go into
23 any more details with regards --

24 MAJ. RUVOLA: Okay.

25 MR. WIEMEYER: -- to that since it's all --

1 MAJ. RUVOLA: Fine.

2 MR. WIEMEYER: -- on the tape.

3 MAJ. RUVOLA: You bet.

4 MR. WIEMEYER: Just some general questions to
5 help me understand hypnotism, which I know absolutely
6 nothing about.

7 MAJ. RUVOLA: Uh-huh.

8 MR. WIEMEYER: Can a hypnotist induce
9 information into a client?

10 MAJ. RUVOLA: They can. And you have to be
11 very careful with that, not to provide any suggestions
12 that would lead a client to say something that maybe he
13 didn't actually recall. And there have been cases
14 regarding false memories -- things of that sort --
15 where people would regress back. And the possibility
16 arose that the hypnotist actually said some things that
17 may have brought on these -- these memories regarding
18 past -- past childhood trauma; traumatic type things of
19 -- things of this sort. So, you have to be very
20 careful.

21 And I was very careful not to do that. And I
22 believe that when you listen to the tape you'll be able
23 to judge for yourself that, hopefully, I did not do
24 that in any way, shape or form.

25 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay.

1 MAJ. RUVOLA: But it is a -- in answer to
2 your question, sir, it is a possibility.

3 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. That's what I want to
4 find out. Because -- can you give us an example of the
5 type of questions that you ask in a general sense when
6 you do have someone under your hypnosis to avoid this
7 type of activity?

8 MAJ. RUVOLA: To avoid it? For example, with
9 regards to the specifics involved with the TWA Flight
10 800, obviously there was speculation that something
11 beyond an aircraft mechanical failure took place.

12 I was very careful not to suggest in any way,
13 shape or form what actually took -- or happened on the
14 flight. I was very careful just to ask Capt. Baur
15 exactly what he was seeing; how he was feeling; his
16 position in the helicopter. Things of this sort.

17 And not to imply or suggest anything to add
18 to his surmise of what happened.

19 MR. WIEMEYER: Do you feel that Capt. Baur
20 gained some insight through the hypnosis that helped
21 him deal with this -- you know, better way?

22 MAJ. RUVOLA: Apparently it did. He would --
23 he told me thereafter that he recalled a few things
24 that he didn't on a conscious level. And apparently, I
25 believe he began to sleep a little bit better. I'm not

1 100 percent sure on that. But I believe he did.

2 MR. WIEMEYER: When people are under
3 hypnosis, do they recall the details of what takes
4 place under hypnosis -- when they are brought back to
5 the --

6 MAJ. RUVOLA: Conscience --

7 MR. WIEMEYER: -- conscience --

8 MAJ. RUVOLA: -- and a whole state of mind?

9 MR. WIEMEYER: Yeah.

10 MAJ. RUVOLA: Yes and no. It -- it all
11 depends. In -- in Baur's case, yes, he did. He did
12 recall everything.

13 MR. WIEMEYER: Okay. I have no further
14 questions.

15 We'd like to go around the room and each one
16 of the people who have questions will identify
17 themselves so that we know who they are for the tape.

18 MR. BURNS: Dave, I'm Lou Burns. I'm a TWA
19 747 captain, and I'm representing the Air Line Pilots
20 Association in this --

21 MAJ. RUVOLA: Right.

22 MR. BURNS: In addition to your training and
23 your degree from St. John's did -- in your
24 undergraduate work did you study psychology? Or do you
25 have any psych? You know, background in psychology?

1 MAJ. RUVOLA: Just a few basic courses for
2 the requirements, that I had for my Bachelor of Science
3 degree.

4 MR. BURNS: Okay.

5 MAJ. RUVOLA: But I -- I did not minor, nor
6 did I major in psychology.

7 MR. BURNS: Okay. That's all. That's all I
8 have. Thank you.

9 MR. CLEMENS: My name is Al Clemens, with the
10 FAA. And I have no questions.

11 MAJ. RUVOLA: Yes, sir.

12 MR. METCALF: And I am Scott Metcalf, with
13 the FBI. I'm a special agent with the Bureau.
14 What city is St. John's located in?

15 MAJ. RUVOLA: Springfield, Louisiana.

16 MR. METCALF: Is -- in the Masters you
17 received in this correspondence course like -- what is
18 it? What's the name of the -- like the designation?

19 MAJ. RUVOLA: It's called the --

20 MR. METCALF: Master's of what?

21 MAJ. RUVOLA: Master Degree -- it's Master of
22 Science in Hypno-therapy. And they also gave me a
23 certified clinical hypno-therapist certification.

24 MR. METCALF: Okay. And a number to reach
25 you? Do you have, like, a office number or home --

1 MAJ. RUVOLA: The office --
2 MR. METCALF: -- number?
3 MAJ. RUVOLA: -- number here is 288-7606.
4 MR. METCALF: Okay.
5 MAJ. RUVOLA: And home phone number is
6 874-2381.
7 MR. METCALF: Okay. What's the area? (516)?
8 MAJ. RUVOLA: Yes.
9 MR. METCALF: Okay. And you're rank in the
10 Coast Guard?
11 MAJ. RUVOLA: In the Air Guard --
12 MR. METCALF: I mean, oh --
13 MAJ. RUVOLA: -- you mean?
14 MR. METCALF: Yeah.
15 MAJ. RUVOLA: That's okay.
16 MR. METCALF: What's the rank?
17 MAJ. RUVOLA: Major.
18 MR. METCALF: Nothing else. Thank you.
19 MAJ. RUVOLA: Yes, sir.
20 MR. STACEY: Dave, Terry Stacey, with TWA;
21 747 captain. I'm trying to assist the NTSB in the
22 investigation.
23 When I am in a normal situation or state, and
24 look at something, see something -- and then I go under
25 hypnosis, is the -- well, let me say this first. Is

1 the eyesight better? Or, describe how that works, as
2 to whether you might see something, or recall something
3 that you saw that you did not consciously record?

4 MAJ. RUVOLA: Okay. I think what you're
5 looking for is can you recall things more acutely or
6 better while under hypnosis, than on -- on a conscious
7 level? Is that --

8 MR. STACEY: Yes. Uh-huh.

9 MAJ. RUVOLA: -- what I'm getting from you?

10 MR. STACEY: Yes, basically.

11 MAJ. RUVOLA: Obviously, that's very
12 subjective. Okay.

13 I would say, yes. And through my training
14 the answer is yes. However, that is something that
15 would be subject to criticism. I don't believe you
16 could prove whether or not somebody had actually seen a
17 thing, or recall something clearer in hypnosis. And
18 that's why I don't believe it will stand up in court.

19 I know that forensic hypnosis, from my
20 understanding of it, is used primarily in the FBI could
21 -- maybe it's enlightened us -- just for looking for
22 leads, and things of this sort, that may help them in
23 an avenue. However, I don't believe it is an -- an
24 acceptable means of evidence in -- in a court of law.

25 MR. STACEY: Okay. For example, I'm in a

1 room here now and there are lots of objects around me
2 that I'm not focussing on. This Coast Guard blue thing
3 in the -- behind you there, is an example. Under
4 hypnosis would I be able to -- if I looked at that
5 would I be able to read that?

6 It -- assuming I could read it?

7 MAJ. RUVOLA: Okay. Another example may be
8 could I bring you back to where you had lunch yesterday
9 in the cafeteria and ask you the question of what color
10 or what type of painting was on the wall, when you
11 consciously were not on the level? The answer is
12 possibly yes.

13 MR. STACEY: How long have you known --

14 MAJ. RUVOLA: Baur?

15 MR. STACEY: -- Baur? -- his rank?

16 MAJ. RUVOLA: I've known him since he joined
17 the unit in approximately 1992, I believe. I believe
18 it was '92 when he joined the unit.

19 MR. STACEY: And your area of hypnosis is
20 well known to the Guard unit? Is that true?

21 MAJ. RUVOLA: I work with people here in the
22 Guard, yes. I don't readily advertise it in -- in
23 attempting to drum up business, or anything along those
24 lines, no. I -- I deal with people on a very personal
25 level and if somebody approaches me on it, yes, I'll

1 help them. And I'm not trying to pay my rent with this
2 by any means or --

3 MR. STACEY: No, I --

4 MAJ. RUVOLA: --way, shape or form.

5 MR. STACEY: -- understand. I'm trying to
6 get the relationship between you and Chris as to his
7 approaching you for the hypnosis.

8 MAJ. RUVOLA: Okay. Chris a -- approached me
9 a while back before the incident 'cause he wanted to
10 stop smoking. And at that point he -- he was aware
11 that I did hypnosis. And, unfortunately, I couldn't
12 provide him the time to do it because I was involved
13 with a very expensive correspondence program here with
14 the Guard in order to make the next rank -- and I spent
15 it -- I finished it up about three months ago.

16 And as such, I wasn't seeing anybody. And I
17 didn't want to take one and not anyone else; so
18 basically across the board I basically put hypnosis on
19 the back burner. So, he was aware of that.

20 But then, after the -- the incident with TWA
21 he then re-approached me and said that he would like to
22 attempt to recall the incident because he can't sleep
23 at night, and there's something that was bothering him
24 about it. And he asked if I could help him. And I
25 said, I -- I -- if I can help, I'd love to.

1 MR. STACEY: Okay. Were you surprised at
2 anything that came out in the -- had you talked to
3 Chris about any of this previously? The incident
4 and --

5 MAJ. RUVOLA: The incident itself?

6 MR. STACEY: -- specifics?

7 MAJ. RUVOLA: Well, I -- I knew basically
8 what he had seen. You know, and what he -- he was
9 reporting, you know. On the television and all the
10 media events I was part of that; not on stage, but I
11 was here as a member and working the command post
12 during that -- the entire aftermath, as everyone else
13 was.

14 MR. STACEY: The -- this is something that
15 just came to mind. Do people normally tell the truth
16 under hypnosis? I'm not saying --

17 MAJ. RUVOLA: He could --

18 MR. STACEY: -- they -- to lie.

19 MAJ. RUVOLA: -- certainly lie, absolutely.
20 That's right.

21 MR. STACEY: I'm sorry?

22 MAJ. RUVOLA: He can certainly lie.

23 MR. STACEY: He can?

24 MAJ. RUVOLA: I mean, there's just no doubt
25 he can. In his particular case I don't believe he was.

1 But, you know, again, that's subject. I -- I feel that
2 he was interested in coming to me -- I know him to be a
3 very honest guy and a very straightforward person, as
4 I'm sure he came across to you folks in here in his
5 interview.

6 And I've been on trips with him and we've
7 talked on a -- on a deep level about issues concerning
8 personnel and incidents sort. And I know him to be a
9 -- a man of integrity. And when he did approach me he
10 was sincere of it. And I'll -- if there was anything I
11 could do to help him, I was going to.

12 And I can tell you this, when he did recall
13 the incident he did become extremely emotional. And I
14 think it was something that he was allowing to get out
15 of -- of his system during that time.

16 MR. STACEY: That must've been a terrible
17 experience. Okay. Thanks, Dave.

18 MAJ. RUVOLA: Sure.

19 MR. STACEY: I have no further questions.

20 MR. WIEMEYER: Dave, I have no further
21 questions. Does anybody else in the group have any
22 other follow-ups?

23 (No response.)

24 MR. WIEMEYER: I want to thank you for taking
25 the --

1 MAJ. RUVOLA: Okay.

2 MR. WIEMEYER: -- time. I was --

3 MAJ. RUVOLA: My pleasure. Thank you very
4 much, sir.

5 MR. WIEMEYER: You're welcome.

6 (Chorus of thank yous.)

7 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded [no
8 time noted.])

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