Factual Report – Attachment 25

Other Pilot Statements

OPERATIONAL FACTORS

DCA19MA086

For the NTSB investigation into the crash of Atlas Air Flight 3591, February 23, 2019

Pilot Statements regarding United Airlines Flight 1754 (IAH-MSY) February 23, 2019

We departed IAH on flight 1754 at 18:29 Zulu. We departed runway 27 On the MMUGS 4 and received vectors and higher altitudes as expected. After some minor weather deviations, we were cleared to Awdad and eventually a visual approach into MSY RWY 11 touching down at 19:09 Zulu. We did not notice anything unusual during the flight. ATC was helpful with altitude and heading deviations due to the minor build ups in the area. We never encountered anything greater then light turbulence.

Regards,

Captain [redacted]
United Airlines

I was the First Officer on United Airlines flight 1754 from IAH to MSY. We departed Houston Bush intercontinental airport from runway 27 and were instructed to climb to 4000 feet. While climbing we received radar vectors from ATC. Once instructed to turn eastward we asked for deviations to avoid medium size weather cells indicating light and moderate precipitation on our radar at our 11 to 12 o'clock. We received clearance to deviate right (South) of course. Once passing the cells we gave a requested tops estimate of the weather. We were then instructed to switch to frequency 124.7. During this time the captain and I were also monitoring the emergency frequency 121.5 on radio number two. At no time did we hear anything abnormal on either frequency.

In the climb out we experienced nothing more than occasional light turbulence and were above most of the weather around 15,000 feet.

Regards,

First Officer [redacted]
United Airlines

For the NTSB investigation into the crash of Atlas Air Flight 3591, February 23, 2019

Pilot Statements regarding United Airlines Flight 1788 (MCO-IAH) February 23, 2019

I was Captain of Flight 1788 with First Officer [redacted] on the Linkk One Arrival into IAH behind the Atlas Air B767 Accident on February 23, 2019. During the arrival descent we encountered constant moderate turbulence approaching Linkk intersection at 250 knots in and out of cloud tops between 15000 to 12000ft. Approaching Gill intersection at 8000ft in clouds IMC and continuous moderate turbulence IAH approach control assigned a southwestern heading between 230 to 270 degrees around Heavy Thunderstorm CB that was painting on our weather radar. This storm was between Garr and Vann intersections with stronger intensity over Vann. We deviated approximately 10 to 15 nautical miles southwest of Vann intersection clearing the heavy weather. IAH Approach Control assigned northeast heading of approximately 300 to 320 degrees for intercept to ILS 26L localizer and approach clearance. During entire approach from Linkk intersection to Kerns intersection on the ILS 26L we experienced constant light to moderate turbulence above 5000ft in and out of clouds.

We heard no unusual radio transmissions from other aircraft on the arrival. Approach Control did ask if anyone had heard an ELT signal. We did not have any visual contact with Atlas Air during the arrival.

Hopefully this report will help with the accident investigation.

Sincerely,
Captain [redacted]
United Airlines

I was the FO on UAL 1788. See below for what I can recall. If there is anything else I can do or can assist in either way, please don't hesitate to reach out.

We were flying in from MCO on UAL1788. Arrival seemed normal other than the calls from ATC to listen for ELT or if other airplanes can see the ground to look for something. The weather that we were painting and trying to avoid was further north of the Atlas crash site. The weather we were seeing was more over Mckaye and Vann. I believe about 15-20k feet, we entered the tops of the clouds. We sat the flight attendants down because it looked like it was going to be bumpy. ATC wanted us to turn to the north to go East of the weather. We asked if we could continue on the present heading to avoid that weather. They obliged, and we stayed present heading until we got west of it, then turned to the north. It was painting pretty bad on the radar, some red and purple, but all over Vann and Mckaye area, not where I understand Atlas to have gone down. We experienced moderate chop descending down, but nothing bad at all. Cleared out through about 7k feet and was a smooth ride the rest of the way in.

First Officer [redacted]
United Airlines

FO [redacted] statement of United Express flight #6043,

The flight to IAH from CHS at FL340 was light to moderate turbulence, so we asked for FL360 which as I recall was a smoother ride. As we got closer to IAH we received the clearance to descend via the LINKK1 arrival. During the descent on the arrival the turbulence was light to occasional moderate. As far as the weather, I had my radar on at a 25-mile range and the only weather it was depicting was around GARR, which we were just about to ask for vectors to the left when ATC gave us vectors to the right and changed our runway assignment from 26L to 26R. After we were vectored around the cell, we called visual on the runway about 20 to 25 miles out.

As far as ATC, as we were descending on the arrival, I received a frequency change and tried to check in but had to wait because another aircraft was trying to pick up an IFR clearance. I heard ATC ask for the aircraft type, souls on board, fuel on board and color of aircraft. I also don't recall hearing a response. As soon as the radio chatter was silent, I checked in on the arrival. Shortly after we received a traffic call, type and altitude unknown. Not sure but I think it was in between LINKK and GILLL. Did not see anything on our TCAS and responded with "looking for traffic". Shortly after we were asked if we heard an ELT. We tuned into 121.5 and responded with "negative ELT". A few moments later we were asked if we had ground contact and I replied with "no". As we approached GARR we were advised to turn right around a weather build up, followed by a left turn towards an intercept heading for 26L. Once we landed we heard ATC respond to another aircraft that a cargo plane had crashed or gone missing.

[redacted]

[redacted]

Borman, Daniel

From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2019 4:55 PM
To: Borman, Daniel
Subject: Re: NTSB Request for crew statement

United Express Flight 6043
KCHS-KIAH
Scheduled Departure time 1630z Feb 23,2019
Scheduled Arrival time 1920z Feb 23, 2019

Cpt.[redacted] description of Flt UA 6043
Arrival assigned LINKK1
As our flight preceded closer to KIAH we received clearance to descend via LINKK1 published speeds at LINKK. Sometime after we passed LINKK we're given RWY 26L. ATC was now using RWY 27 for Takeoff so set for 26L transition and dial the ALT back up to 7 thousand ft. Upon flying toward GILLL we're advised of a primary target type and altitude unknown off GILLL " it will be at our 1 o'clock 6 miles NE bound" per ATC. We never see the traffic and it never appears on TCAS later or before we're also asked to see if we can pick up an ELT and later asked if we have ground contact we reply "no ELT " and " no ground contract" as we were still above the clouds at this time. During the meantime F.O. [redacted] has weather radar up on his side as I have the plan view up on mine scrolling through to make sure all the fixes are correct. F.O.[redacted] point out on the Map view that there's weather up ahead on the 26L approach I don't remember the angle he had it to only that it was zoomed in for approach so that we could navigate around it. Just as I was about to have him request a deviation to avoid the cell ATC gives us " turn hdg 360deg for wx descend to 6 thousand ft for moderate to heavy precipitation 10 o'clock " and that once we get north of it they would turn us west bound. ATC then gave us " 210kts or greater 340 deg when able " After navigating around the cell we were then told to set for 26R next was for us to turn L300 down to 4 thousand. Later on we're given present heading to join as we called the field about 24 miles out F.O. Barrs calls it at which point we're cleared visual approach 26R.

As far as the ride from KCHS to KIAH we had a smooth ride about have way there at FL340 at which point we encounter light to moderate turbulence so we request FL360 it's smooth later for traffic we're told to descend back to FL340.

My condolences to the crew members on giant 3591 heavy they will be missed.

Captain Matthew[redacted]

Sent from my iPad

On Feb 26, 2019, at 11:28 AM, Borman, Daniel [redacted] wrote:

> Good morning Captain [redacted],
> As mentioned the NTSB requested a crew statement for flight 6043 CHS – IAH on 2/23/2019.
> Thank You
>
> **Dan J. Borman**
> <image001.jpg> Safety Program Manager
> [redacted]

Pilots that Flew N1217A 2 Days Preceding the Accident Flight

Questions:

- Do you recall having any automation or flight control issues with N1217A on the last day you flew the airplane prior to the accident? Describe.

- Do you recall having any automation or flight control issues with N1217A or any B-767 flown at Atlas at any time in the past? Describe.

23 Feb

[redacted]

Do you recall having any automation or flight control issues with N1217A on the last day you flew the airplane prior to the accident? Please Describe.

- During our flight from Ontario to Miami (GTI 3504 on 02/23/2019) the only automation issue we had during flight was that the airplane did not want to hold airspeed while on VNAV, leveled at FL390. It began to speed up, so I pulled the power to maintain the speed and not let the airplane over speed, after that, it began to slow down from the target speed, so I used Speed Intervene (Opened the Speed Window) to maintain target speed (Econ Cruise speed given by the FMS, which was .78 Mach). I left this automation mode on for about 10 minutes since it maintained speed very well, after 10 minutes I closed the speed window and let VNAV continue maintaining speed. There were no other issues along the rest of the flight.

Do you recall having any automation or flight control issues with N1217A or any B-767 flown at Atlas at any time in the past? Please Describe.

- I have had various Automation issues with various airplanes in the Atlas fleet since my time with the company. As I don't recall the dates and tail numbers, I do recall the events.
- I have had problems with various airplanes maintaining airspeed while on VNAV, like stated above on N1217A. Another issue I have encountered is that some airplanes have a hard time leveling off at the altitude set in the MCP, I have a specific case with a tail number which I will explain in a next.
- On 03/26/2019 I was operating GTI 3599 HNL-ONT on N1489A, we were on our initial climb out from of Honolulu with VNAV engaged and the Center Auto Pilot. We were cleared for 5,000ft and the airplane failed to level off at the altitude set in the MCP (5,000'), VNAV ALT was displayed on the FMA but kept a steady climb at about 1,500fpm. I proceeded to disengage the Auto Pilot and stopped the climb at 5,200 ft and leveled it off manually back at 5,000 ft. We were then cleared to climb to 16,000 ft, so we set up the autopilot again and engaged the Center Auto Pilot and it continued the climb normally on VNAV. I recall having this same issue on an earlier date on N1373A.
- Another issue I have encountered was that an airplane had to level off at FL400. Passing FL370 the mode on the FMA changed from VNAV SPEED, to VNAV ALT, this is 3,000ft below the altitude it was supposed to level off at, normally this FMA change occurs prior to level off. What this did was that the airplane began to bleed off airspeed significantly, enough for us to disengage the autopilot and manually level it off and regain the airspeed it lost.
- The latest event that happened was on N1709A on 04/08/2019. I was operating GTI 3099 MIA-CVG. During our descent to CVG, I was the PF and was on VNAV PTH, yet the Chinese glideslope showed that I was 5429 ft below track, so the airplane was descending at a slower rate, which I figured it was waiting to get on the Glide Path to continue the descent. After 3 minutes I saw that I was going to be high for my altitude restriction on the Arrival and tried to make sense of what the airplane was doing. I looked over at the Captains PFD and his FMA showed VNAV SPD, and showed us 499 ft above the Glide Path, while mine showed VNAV PTH and 5429 ft below it. I continued to do my descent now on FLCH since the VNA was giving us wrong information. We made our altitude crossing restriction, and the aircraft continued a normal decent on FLCH.

CA [redacted]
I operated this aircraft the night before the accident from HNL to ONT. After the accident I called my First officer Lee Estes. We discussed all the aspects of the flight as we remembered in anticipation of answering these type of questions. The answer to both questions is no. It was a routine flight with no observed flight control issues. In my experience with other b767 aircraft in the Atlas fleet I do not recall any flight control issues. It is important that I note that upon arrival in ONT I did have difficulty setting the parking brake. I entered this discrepancy in the Log Book.

FO [redacted]
I did not have any issues with neither the automation nor the flight controls on N1217A on my flight from Honolulu, HI to Ontario, CA the night of February 22, 2019 which was the last time I flew N1217A. It was an uneventful flight.

I have personally not had any issues with the automation or the flight controls on any of the B767's that I have flown at Atlas Air.

22 Feb

CA [redacted]
[redacted] recall having any automation or flight control issues with N1217A on the last day you flew the airplane prior to the accident? Please Describe.

- I did not have any automation or flight control issue with N1217A on the last day I flew the airplane prior to the accident.

Do you recall having any automation or flight control issues with N1217A or any B-767 flown at Atlas at any time in the past? Please Describe.

- I have not had any automation or flight control issue with N1217A or any B-767 flown at Atlas at any time in the past.

FO [redacted]
I was PM on Fri, 22 Feb 2019, from RIV to HNL. We had no issues of any type, as far as I can remember. 1217 seemed like a nice flyer.

CA [redacted]
I don't recall having any automation for flight control issues with N1217A. I do recall how loud the it was. The packs sounded to be in high flow all the time, similar to an LCF. It was a obstacle to overcome while trying to communicate with the other pilot, easy to miss what the other crewmember may have said. Even below 10,000, turning off one pack did not help.

I don't recall any automation for flight control issues with any other B767, expect pilot induced errors. I've seen turning the speed bug instead of heading bug and not fully understanding what VNAV will do when engaged.

FO [redacted]
Regarding N1217A, I do not recall having any issues. Looking at my flight record, I believe I flew it the day prior to the accident.

I have had no flight control issues during my time at Atlas. As for automation, I've seen just a handful of seemingly computer hiccups. I've written one ASAP for an incident and then the other times the captain wrote them up/alerted maintenance. These were all things that with the normal monitoring were caught immediately, dealt with, and really weren't that big of deals.

21 Feb

CA [redacted]
I flew N1217A two days prior on the 21st from CVG-RFD with my first officer [redacted] at the controls. We didn't have any automation or flight control anomalies during that sector. I have a photo of the log page should you require it.

In regards to the second question...I've never experienced any flight control problems in a 767 other than a total loss of the right hydraulic system on touchdown in a 767-200 about 18 months ago. The backup systems all worked properly and the malfunction was mostly transparent, minus a Hydraulically powered right thrust reverser that wouldn't deploy for obvious reasons. In addition I recently had one autopilot fail in cruise on a 767-300 but it simply disengaged and another one was selected. The 767 had been a very reliable airplane in my experience on it with three different airlines.

FO [redacted]
I do NOT recall having any automation or flight control issues on 1217A when I last flew it, nor during any other flight I performed in that aircraft. I also have NOT experienced any flight control or automation issues on any flight with our fleet of 767 aircraft I've personally flown.

CA [redacted]
I had no issues with N1217A the last time I flew it before the accident. The flight was normal and the airplane performed normal and as expected with no discrepancies.

I do not recall having any flight control issues on the airplane in the past when I have flown it. The only flight control issue I have experienced on an Atlas 767 was a Leading Edge Slat Disagree and failure of the flap and slat systems on N1499A. Besides that I don't recall having any flight control problems on N1217A or any other Atlas 767.

FO [redacted]
Question 1: There were no issues on my flight on N1217A from PDX to CVG.

Question 2: I do not recall any specific issues with N1217A in the past. A flight control issue that I did have was on N1499A on 2/16/19. On departure from TPA, an EICAS message of "LE SLAT ASYM" came up. An emergency was declared and we returned to TPA. On other flights, I do recall in the past there was a center auto pilot written up and thus a left auto pilot was engaged.

From: Richards Michael <m[redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, May 8, 2019 2:31 PM
To: Plantz, Jeff <[redacted] Lawrence David [redacted]
Subject: RE: United Airlines Support - NTSB Atlas Air Accident Investigation - Flight Crew Statements and Updates to Requested Items
Sensitivity: Confidential

Received. Thank you very much for working this for us. Appreciated Jeff!

From: Plantz, Jeff <[redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, May 8, 2019 2:25 PM
To: Richards Michael <[redacted] Lawrence David [redacted]
Subject: United Airlines Support - NTSB Atlas Air Accident Investigation - Flight Crew Statements and Updates to Requested Items
Sensitivity: Confidential

Dear David and Michael,

Here is what the pilots recollected. Please confirm receipt of the information. I hope it helps with your investigation.

Sincerely, Jeff

Captain [redacted]

1. During the entire approach and descent we encountered continuous light to moderate turbulence.
2. In and out for clouds from approximately 17000ft MSL to 5000ft MSL on the arrival to ILS26L at IAH.
3. Did not hear or have any visual contact with Atlas Air.
4. Only occasional ground visual contact through broken cloud base below us.
5. We deviated 15NM to 25NM SouthWest of the final approach course of Runway 26L for weather avoidance of Heavy Thunderstorm 20NM to 30NM East of IAH Runway 26L with Thunderstorm building between GARR and VANN intersections on the arrival ILS26L.
6. After clearing the Thunderstorm area we were able to intercept the ILS26L Localizer and continue the arrival and approach to landing.
7. Did not encounter any Wind Shear Alert or Warnings during the Arrival and Descent.
8. In and out of Cloud Tops during the Arrival until below approximately 5000ftMSL.
9. Did not notice any significant change in Wind Direction or Speed during the arrival.
10. The convective activity for that time during the arrival and season was normal and not unusual.

First Officer [redacted]

1. I'm not sure where we entered the clouds (I believe they were around 12k feet), but as soon as we entered the clouds, it was moderate. Was not bad though. I believe we stayed in IMC a while while descending down. I don't think we truly "broke out" until around 7k feet. As soon as we broke out, it was much smoother. I don't recall there being much, if any, VMC conditions until then.

2. At Gill, we were still in IMC. If we broke out, it was still very quickly back into IMC. We elected to head west because of the weather by the arrival of 26L. Prior to entering IMC, we could see the base of the clouds. Cloud was was nothing special. We weren't painting anything on the radar west where we were heading. I don't recall there being any actively growing clouds that you can see in the summer time. Just looked normal to me.

3. As far as I can recall, when we entered IMC around LINKK, we didn't break out until 7k feet or so when I told controllers it was a smooth ride under it. If we broke out in between, I don't recall. The ride through the clouds was moderate though, nothing worse.

4. Sorry, no I do not recall any of this. Seemed like a normal flight to us.

Jeff Plantz
Sr. Investigator - Flight Safety
United, Corporate Support Center – [redacted], Chicago, IL 60606
[redacted]