

Corporate Airlines, Inc.  
Kirksville, Missouri  
October 19, 2004  
DCA05MA004

**National Transportation Safety Board**  
**Washington, DC**

**Attachment 1**

Survivor Statement

4 Pages

██████████ - Corporate Airlines Flight 5966  
NARRATION OF EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH AIRPLANE CRASH  
OCTOBER 19, 2004.

I began the trip in Salt Lake City on a Southwest Airlines Flight to St. Louis. I was accompanied by ██████████, the KCOM Site Coordinator for Utah and by ██████████ the Utah Clinical Regional Assistant Dean. I am the Utah Administrative Assistant Dean. We were on our way to Kirksville, MO., with a schedule that would put us into the Kirksville Regional Airport at 7:34 pm. I had made previous arrangements for my daughter, ██████████ to pick us up at the airport.

We boarded the plane in St. Louis for the second leg of the trip – the flight to Kirksville. The plane was a two-engine turboprop, parked on the runway not far from another, slightly larger plane. I think I was the last passenger to board. We entered by a portable stairway into a doorway near the rear of the plane on the left side. I didn't realize our seats were assigned, so I went forward to mid cabin and sat in the seat on the right window where the emergency exit was located for that side of the plane. I had walked past ██████████ who had taken his seat on the left about the second row from the rear. ██████████ was seated in the seat by the emergency exit on the left side. As soon as I sat down, ██████████ told me that this was not my assigned seat and I replied that I would just stay in that seat because no one else was coming in after me and there was more leg-room. The seats in the cabin were in three longitudinal rows with an aisle separating the two on the right from the one on the left.

I was acquainted with one of the passengers besides my companions. His name was ██████████ D.O. from Florida. ██████████ had been one of my students in Anatomy many years ago in Kirksville. I had talked to him briefly at the Terminal before we boarded and now he was seated in the row in front of me, just right of the aisle. Besides ██████████, seated back a few rows on the left side, I didn't recognize anyone else behind me. On the front row, left of the aisle was a gray, balding, middle-aged man, and directly across the aisle from him was a handsome gray-haired man, of similar age, with a full head of hair. On the second row, on the left side of the aisle, was a woman I think I recognized from previous trips. I thought she was either a site coordinator or a regional dean, and across the aisle from her was an attractive young blonde woman whom I had seen at earlier meetings. On the next row on the left side was another young woman that I recognized as a site coordinator. She was thin, brunette and pretty. Opposite her on the right side was ██████████

We sat without the engines being started for a few minutes. The engines were then started and warmed up. The pilot came back and sat in the seat next to me and asked me a question. Over the sound of the engines, and with my slight hearing loss, I wasn't sure what he said at first. Then as he gestured toward the escape hatch handle, I realized he was asking me if I would be responsible, in the case of a crash, to open the escape hatch. He explained that I needed to reach up and pull up on the handle and then turn the door diagonally and throw it out. During his explanation, I reached up toward the handle, without the intention of opening the door, whereupon he jokingly said "No, only in case of a crash." He then turned to ██████████ on the opposite side of the plane and asked her the same question. He explained to everyone in the cabin that there was a set of instructions behind each seat. I don't remember whether he detailed the instructions to us or not. It

may be that he merely referred to the instructions and encouraged us to read them ourselves, but I'm not sure.

The rest of the flight was uneventful, except, of course, for the end. I remember [redacted] waving to me and pointing out the window at the beautiful sunset. Everyone seemed to be in good spirits. The site coordinators sitting on both sides of the aisle carried on a lively conversation the whole time. Darkness finally settled in completely after the sunset. When we got closer to Kirksville, the blinking lights on the wingtips came on. An unintelligible announcement from the Captain came over the PA system, and I assumed it was to remind us to prepare for landing, and to put our trays up. I later asked [redacted] how much of it she understood, and she said it was difficult to understand due to the engine noise.

I heard and felt the landing gear come down, and I looked out the window where I could see down behind the back of the wing. I expected to see lights from farm houses or from cars on the roads, but all I saw was blackness. I felt the plane make a slow left turn, expecting this to be a final alignment with the runway. I was caught by complete surprise by the first sound of the plane hitting a tree, and I'm sure the other passengers were too, because the friendly conversations had continued up to that very second.

This initial sound was like crashing into a tin shed – very metallic, and it elicited some screams from the passengers. Then there was a rapid succession of jolts as the plane struck more trees.

I may have been unconscious for a brief period. The next thing I remembered was looking up and seeing the cabin in semidarkness. Papers and other debris were scattered everywhere. I heard a few groans or sighs. As I started to move I realized my left hip was broken. I immediately unlatched my seatbelt and then realized that someone was lying across my lap. The cabin was being indirectly illuminated by a light source outside on the opposite side. It was enough for me to see that it was a redheaded woman wearing a red sweater and a brown leather jacket. There was blood on her arm and hand. I don't remember much about getting to the opposite side. I pushed the woman off me and drug myself over to an opening in the other side of the cabin. It may have been the other emergency door or just a torn out section of the plane. I don't remember if I opened the door or not. As I looked out I recognized that the light was coming from a fire outside and under the plane. The autumn leaves were bright yellow.

Much to my great disappointment I saw that the wing was gone, and I was about 8 feet from the ground. As I had crawled across the plane [redacted] called out [redacted] in a pleading tone that seemed to melt my heart. I had hoped to be able to swing myself out and stand on the wing while reaching in to help [redacted]. By then the blue-gray smoke was filling the cabin, and I knew I could only save myself, so I dove headfirst out with a raging fire so close that I immediately crawled away on my back going headfirst, and using my good right leg and my elbows. By then the pain in my hip was intense, and I had to hold my thigh to keep it from flopping out to the side. I looked up at the plane and saw a woman coming out of the same opening headfirst and falling down into the flames. I didn't know it was [redacted]. I thought she was going to either die from the fall or from the flames. I crawled as far away as I could, but soon found myself entangled in a wild rose thicket that scratched my head and arms. The heat was so painful, especially on my left toe that I attempted to roll over sideways into the thicket to get away from the burning pain.

Many frightful explosions occurred, sending great fireballs of flame high up in the sky. There were also explosions followed by hissing sounds as if tires were burning thin and then releasing their air. I couldn't withdraw my left foot away from the heat because of the broken hip, and my foot felt like it was burning. When I had crawled into the rose bushes as far as I could go I tried to hold some of the branches in front of my face to shield me from the heat.

After a time the fire got smaller and I actually began to feel the cold ground on my back. I started to shiver from the cold, and eventually the cold, the pain, and the thoughts of the good people who perished in the fire just overcame me and I cried uncontrollably for some time. I especially felt a deep pain for [REDACTED] because I had known him and his wife [REDACTED] ever since they came to Kirksville where [REDACTED] began his medical education. He was one of my anatomy students, and we also went to church together, and played basketball together. He and I had worked together for the past few years, directing student rotations in Utah. I was also overcome by the loss of [REDACTED]. At the time I didn't realize she had survived, and the thought of losing such a wonderful person was almost more than I could bear.

I became worried that we had crashed in a remote area where we wouldn't be found right away, and it seemed like a long time before I finally heard the sound of a siren. At one point a mouse crawled along one of the branches right in front of my face, and I had thoughts of coyotes finding me before a rescue party arrived. When I finally heard a voice it was a man saying over a cell phone "confirmed sighting of downed aircraft". Immediately a voice on the other side of the plane called out for help, and I knew for the first time that someone else had survived too. It was, of course, [REDACTED] but I didn't know it at the time. I was almost walked on before someone heard my faint "over here". My bruises and broken ribs wouldn't allow much of a voice to call out. Several people gathered around me and began to break away the rose bushes to get to me. A young man, [REDACTED] introduced himself to me and said he had been on the Kirksville wrestling team with my son. Someone else said they knew me from earlier days when I had done physical therapy on their grandmother. I was asked my name several times along with questions to determine my mental status. I told them my left hip was broken. One of them put his coat under my left knee at my request to help alleviate the pain and allow me to stop holding my thigh up. They attended to my bloody head and several of them together put me onto a spinal board. They carried me for a distance and then I was put on some sort of flatbed vehicle and transported to an ambulance. They gently put me into the ambulance alongside another person. On the way to the hospital I remember the excruciating pain in my hip, and I soon learned by the way they talked to the other person that she was a woman. I asked if her name was [REDACTED] and to my delight I was told yes. I didn't see her again until we were both in the ICU a few days later.

When we arrived at the Emergency Room I was greeted by several old familiar faces of former students who were now physicians in the ER as well as some of the nursing staff who were also familiar. My daughter, [REDACTED] greeted me, and many people quickly took care of me. I talked to my wife on the phone briefly, and then I was anaesthetized and taken to surgery, and the next thing I remember was waking up in the ICU.

I was asked to do a telephone interview for the local TV station, KTVO, the next morning. The newsman was [REDACTED]. In listening to that tape later I noticed one or two things that were different from my written account above. On the tape I said that I heard some screams during the time I was getting out of the plane and after I had crawled back away from the fire. I guess I'm just not sure of this. I know I became aware of the feelings of the surviving families later, and I may have suppressed those memories in an attempt to not suggest that they suffered from the fire, but at this writing I am just not sure. I know I had some guilt feelings later when I was in the rehab floor, and I regretted that I had broken my hip which prevented me from helping others get out of the plane. I remembered crossing my legs (left over right) just before the crash, and that took up all the extra space between me and the seat in front of me, and I assumed that was why I broke my left hip. My psychiatrist, Dr. [REDACTED] in Kirksville assured me that most of the passengers were probably critically injured in the first place, and in the second place if I had pushed them out of an eight foot drop, that probably would have killed them anyway. Also, I would have had no way to drag them away from the fire. He also suggested that my crossed legs may have allowed the impact of the crash to be absorbed by my hip rather than by my head crashing against the seat in front of me. In other words, the broken hip may have saved me from a serious or even fatal head injury. His logic helped me a great deal. I no longer blame myself for the others' deaths.

I had the very best of care in the ICU. I was miserable, but well cared for. I was under the care of Dr. [REDACTED] another of my old students from years before. I also knew some of the nurses [REDACTED] from the days when I did some Physical therapy work in the hospital. My body was so bruised that it was hard to find a comfortable position. He nights seemed endless. I couldn't sleep much of the time, and I grew to hate the bed. However, when I started to sit up I got tired so fast that I was glad to get back into the bed again. There was no food that tasted good to me. I had very little saliva, and swallowing was difficult. I walked around a bit using a walker. I was kept in ICU for extra days to isolate me from the media. My family members came to see me. I was amazed to learn that the airlines had flown my children and grandchildren to Kirksville. I couldn't understand what all the fuss was about.

I was subsequently transferred to the rehab floor of the hospital where I had PT and OT twice each day. I walked with the walker, did exercises, learned to dress myself and take showers with minimal help.

[REDACTED] parents, another son, and a son-in-law came by to talk to me. They seemed to be taking it well. I was impressed at how much [REDACTED] looked like his dad and his brother.

