



## **NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**

Office of Aviation Safety  
Washington, D.C. 20594

November 22, 2022

### **Attachment 2. Flight Attendant Statements Summary**

# **SURVIVAL FACTORS**

DCA22FA132

## A. Flight Attendant Summaries

Members of the Survival Factors Group conducted the following interviews at Miami International Airport (MIA), Miami, Florida on June 23, 2022.

**Interview:** Carlina Pinales, Lead Flight Attendant RED Air  
**Date:** June 23, 2022  
**Location:** Miami Airport  
**Time:** 11:37 am  
**Representative:** Juan Garcia, translator  
**Present:** Emily Gibson (NTSB), Patrick Lusch (FAA), Angela Cruz (Boeing), Captain Patrick Lewis (Miami Fire Rescue)

During the interview Ms. Pinales stated that she was seated at the L1 jumpseat on the inboard location and Reynaldo Cancu (flight attendant 4) was seated in the outboard seat of the double jumpseat. She mentioned that her training was about two years ago and was hired just before the pandemic. It was late 2019 when she was interviewed, somewhere between May and August 2020 was when she completed her training. She started flying November 2021 with RED Air on revenue flights. There was delay in training due to the pandemic.

On the day of the event, before leaving Santo Domingo, she checked the emergency equipment, emergency lighting system, lavatory function, all before passengers boarded. After this was complete, they notified the captain that they were ready to board. They had a briefing with the captain. The briefing included the positions and locations of the flight attendants, that she was lead for this flight, and that they had an inspector on board (called a TSI). The captain also briefed the flight attendants on what to do in case of an emergency, decompression (use the closest mask and do not remove until directed). The captain also discussed the weather along the route to Miami which would have a little turbulence.

After the briefing, they commenced boarding. They had 130 total passengers (126 adults, and 4 infants on lap). There were two pilots, four flight attendants, and two extra flight attendants as observers in training but seated in passenger seats with no responsibilities. Once everyone boarded, flight attendant 3 did the emergency exit row briefing, flight attendant 2 did the full passenger safety briefing over the PA, and the rest of the flight attendants performed the emergency demonstration.

Ms. Pinales described the flight as being a calm and a normal flight through takeoff and during service. During the landing preparation, she secured the galley and cabin. She felt that the landing felt normal, and that initial touchdown went from right side to left side and that both were smooth. But as soon as the pilot activated thrust reversers, they felt vibration. She noted that the thrust reversers were very loud and then,

suddenly, they were turned off. After that, the vibrations in the cabin were very excessive and everything was shaking violently. After the plane stopped, she got on the PA and began to tell all passengers to remain seated. While she was doing this, the captain overrode her on the PA and said to stay calm and stay seated. Then she opened the cockpit door from her seated position and asked the captain if she should remain seated and he said yes, remain seated.

She noticed a woman, holding a baby (unhurt) around row 4 and sat her down in row 3, She started hearing passengers in the back yell "fire", but she did not see it. She stated she smelled smoke but could not see any smoke or fire. She told the captain, "Fire in the rear of the aircraft," and the captain announced on the PA, "Evacuate, evacuate, left side." Then she told Reynaldo to "Open, open the door." Reynaldo opened the door and the slide automatically inflated and she started evacuating people from the cabin. At that moment she noticed that flight attendant 2 had already evacuated from the rear of the aircraft and moved towards the nose of the airplane. She saw him far away, but she could communicate with him. She yelled to him, "have you evacuated the rear of the aircraft," and he responded, "yes." She mentioned that all of business class evacuated out of L1, 25-30 total passengers egressed from L1 including two of the women with infants. The other 2 women with infants egressed from L2. During the evacuation she recalled one passenger taking a bag and she took the bag and threw it back in the cabin. There was an elderly passenger who was picked up and placed on the slide and evacuated.

Ms. Pinales evacuated out of the L1 door and stated that the last people on the aircraft were her, the captain, and the first officer. The captain walked the entire cabin, and the first officer told her to evacuate when the captain was around row 10, that he would wait for the captain.

Once off the airplane the fire department had to keep passengers away from the airplane and directed them to leave the area. They tried to do a count of the passengers, but it was too chaotic, and they could not. One passenger hurt his knee because he landed on his knee off the slide, but she does not know what door he came out of. She also confirmed the captain was seated in the left seat of the flightdeck and first officer in the right seat.

She stated that during takeoff from Santo Domingo, the landing gear retraction felt and sounded normal. This was also the case upon landing in MIA. During the start of the evacuation, she said that no one pressured her to open R1, she blocked it, and passengers opened the OWWE. She also mentioned that, per their procedures, when fire is visible, the tailcone exit is not used per their training.

During the emergency and the evacuation, she felt the passengers were calm in the front. She recalled only one person trying to get their bags and everyone listened to

her orders well. She thought that the evacuation was quick and took less than approximately 50 seconds.

She said that her training helped during this emergency and that the crew was excellent. She has flown with this cabin crew before, and she has flown with each of the pilots before on different flights. Her position is also a training instructor and check flight attendant.

**Interview:** Nicol Velasques, Flight Attendant 2 RED Air  
**Date:** June 23, 2022  
**Location:** Miami Airport  
**Time:** 12:25 pm  
**Representative:** Juan Garcia, translator  
**Present:** Emily Gibson (NTSB), Patrick Lusch (FAA), Angela Cruz (Boeing), Captain Patrick Lewis (Miami Fire Rescue)

During the interview Mr. Velasques stated that he has been employed with RED Air since they started operations and was hired in January 2021. Flight attendant training began late July 2021. During the flight he was seated in the double jumpseat forward of the tailcone exit door on the left side seat and no one was seated next to him. Before leaving Santo Domingo, he participated in a flight attendant crew briefing in the office and one with the captain in the aircraft. The pilot briefing included the flight conditions and time of the flight, and a review of emergency procedures for the various types of emergencies, including the scenario they had, that could happen. Ditching emergencies and security issues were discussed as well. All the emergency equipment and door slides were checked, including the expiration dates, pressure readings and girt bars. The flight attendants also checked the emergency lighting system, O2 bottles, and fire extinguishers. He described boarding as normal. He mentioned they had 126 adults and 4 infants, 130 passengers total, plus crew. Infants were mostly in the front with at row 1 and around row 22 or 23. They were all lap children.

After the passengers were seated, flight attendant gave the exit row briefing to the passengers seated in those rows. He confirmed that passengers were seated in the exit rows. Mr. Velasques described the flight as completely normal and that the passengers were very calm and tired. He mentioned that there was not a lot of "needy" passengers.

During the landing, he described it as fine and soft. Then he heard the thrust reversers come on and felt vibration to start. He also described that the time the thrust reversers being on as being quicker than normal. When that happened, he told passengers to remain seated using the PA. After that, there was another kind of vibration which was harder than before. He then instructed the passengers to get their heads down and realized something was wrong.

A few seconds before they stopped, he saw fire near the right wing, so he blocked his door, per procedure, and helped to direct the evacuation. Flight attendant 3 opened the L2 door. He stated that most passengers in the aft of the airplane evacuated L2 and overwing window exits and that he did not open any exits. During the evacuation, he moved to the overwing window exits because he noticed they were taking luggage and directed them to stop taking their bags and evacuate. He also stayed on the right side to block the opened right-side exit and redirected passengers out the left side. Additionally, he mentioned that there were no passengers seated in the 4 rows behind L2 on left side. Once the passengers evacuated, he directed Anthia (flight attendant 3)

to evacuate and, as he moved back to L2 to get his emergency equipment, he found that it was difficult to breathe because of the thick smoke. He could see that the grey and black smoke was coming in the open right overwing window exit. Instead of getting any other equipment, he checked to ensure no passengers were in the back and he evacuated out of L2. Once off the airplane he walked near L1 to assist with moving passengers away from the plane.

During the evacuation, he described the passengers as desperate due to the fire but were cooperative and listened to commands as he helped with diverting some passengers from the overwing window exits to the L2 exit. He estimated around 20-30 passengers evacuated out of L2, up to 40. He confirmed that the passengers opened the overwing window exits without direction.

He stated that he did hear the captain say, "Evacuate left side," but by that time, he already evacuated half the plane due to seeing the fire. He felt that his training helped him, but it was quite different in real life. He mentioned that "training gets you ready for the situation, but you do not know it until you experience it." He also said that the flight attendants do a silent review prior to takeoff and landing when in the jumpseats.

During the incident, he did not feel the gear had collapsed because there was no perspective on angle from where he was seated and had no issues with his restraints. He did not remember taking them off. Mr. Valasquez mentioned he has flown with the same crew before, and that RED Air has a total of 44 flight attendants.

After the interview, it was asked if the flight attendants in training/observing had helped with the evacuation. He stated that the trainees assisted passengers with getting to the exits, notably the 11 passengers which needed additional assistance. They were seated in passenger seats; one was seated in the business class area, and one was seated towards the back.

**Interview:** Anthia Acosta, Flight Attendant 3 RED Air  
**Date:** June 23, 2022  
**Location:** Miami Airport  
**Time:** 1:00 pm  
**Representative:** Juan Garcia, translator  
**Present:** Emily Gibson (NTSB), Patrick Lusch (FAA), Angela Cruz (Boeing), Captain Patrick Lewis (Miami Fire Rescue)

During the interview, Ms. Acosta stated that she was seated at the L2 single jumpseat. She had been with RED Air since December 2021 and finished training sometime in January 2022. She had flown many times with the cabin crew as well as with both pilots. Prior to the flight they had a flight attendant briefing before another briefing with the captain. This briefing covered the flight conditions of the flight and emergency procedures which included what to do when a decompression or runway excursion, among others. After the briefing she performed the preflight emergency equipment checks.

During boarding Ms. Acosta provided the safety briefing to the passengers located in the emergency exit rows and to people behind the aft galley since they cannot see the safety demonstration. During that briefing, she introduced herself and asked if they know they are in the emergency row. She also asked them that, in case of an emergency, if they will help. She told them that during taxi, take-off, and landing that they cannot use cell phones and keep the window shade open. She told them that if they did not want to sit there, they could tell her, and she would move them. She also directed them to read the safety card.

She described the flight as completely normal enroute to Miami and that the crew was great and worked well together. On approach, she heard the landing gear come down and the landing was completely normal and soft at the beginning, but then there was a vibration that shook everything. She and flight attendant 2 were telling people to please stay seated. Flight attendant 2 tried to use PA but she could not hear it. She was shouting to those around her. Then she felt what she thought was the nose gear contacting the runway and then the vibrations came harder. She also recalled that the thrust reversers being applied seemed short. During the vibration, she heard a command over the PA saying to remain seated. The plane then started sinking on the left side and then another sinking feeling and then it stopped completely.

Once they stopped, she stated that it was a different situation in the back of the airplane from the front because they had the fire. Per training she was waiting for the captain to announce evacuation. But 2 seconds later after not hearing anything and the fire, she initiated the evacuation. She took off her harness and seat belt, saw the conditions outside her door. At the beginning there was nothing. She verified the door was armed and opened it. She stayed back to let the slide inflate automatically and to hold passengers back. At this time, passengers were rushing to get out and she held onto a

handle in the galley to brace herself. The commands she gave during the evacuation were, "sit, slide, and get away from the airplane." While she was evacuating, she heard the captain say over the PA, "Evacuate left side."

She said that most of the aft section evacuated through 2L. She did notice that one passenger had opened the right overwing window exit and smoke began to enter the airplane cabin, but by the time she noticed it, most had already evacuated, and she started directing passengers to come her way and they complied.

She noticed there was only crew onboard in the front, Mr. Velasquez directed her to evacuate, and she evacuated through L2 door. Once outside she went to L1 to help the passengers and crew exit. She also saw a lot of smoke on the outside and had a tough time breathing. She said that the fire department did an amazing job by getting there so quickly and that the passengers followed directions and walked to the buses.

She felt that her training was helpful, beneficial, and stated that her door opened easily, just as she trained. She also mentioned that she had no issue with her restraints and did not recall seeing any injuries.



**Interview:** Reynaldo Cantu, Flight Attendant 4 RED Air  
**Date:** June 23, 2022  
**Location:** Miami Airport  
**Time:** 1:32 pm  
**Representative:** Juan Garcia, translator  
**Present:** Emily Gibson (NTSB), Patrick Lusch (FAA), Angela Cruz (Boeing), Captain Patrick Lewis (Miami Fire Rescue)

During the interview, Mr. Cantu stated that he was hired between December 2018 and January 2019, during airline certification, and finished initial training in July 2020. On this flight, he was sitting on the L1 double jumpseat in the outboard seat, closest to the door. Flight attendant 1 was seated to his left. Before the flight, the crew had a briefing where they talked about the documentation for the flight. During this briefing, they verified passports, visas, and general declaration. They checked their flashlights, reviewed their uniforms, luggage, and FA manuals. They were assigned their positions for the flight. On the airplane they do a review of emergency scenarios, including the scenario that happened on this flight. He reviewed and discussed his specific procedures for where he was seated.

After the briefing, the passengers boarded, and the forms and manifest were given to flight attendant 1. During this time, he assisted the passengers who needed help to their seats including some parents with infants. Once everyone was seated, they verified the passenger count to the manifest and gave it to the captain. The captain authorized closing the boarding door. Flight attendant 1 closed the L1 door and he closed R1. Both doors were armed. They double checked each other's doors to verify that they were closed and armed then flight attendant 2 called the captain to announce the aft was closed and ready. The briefing was given to passengers at exit rows prior to closing the door by flight attendant 3 and the full cabin safety briefing was given by flight attendant 2.

Mr. Cantu described the flight as perfectly normal with a little turbulence, but a good flight. On approach to landing, he could not hear the gear come down where he was seated but could feel that the airplane was different. He did not notice anything abnormal, and touchdown was perfectly normal.

A moment after touchdown he noticed some hard vibrations, and everything was shaking in the galley. Then when the vibration stopped, the plane smoothed out, for a second time, the vibrations came back, and he felt the aircraft start sliding to the left. He did not hear the engines or thrust reversers.

He knew something was wrong and knew there was an emergency but did not know the extent of it. He recalled giving the command to "lower heads and brace" and once the plane stopped, he said to "remain seated" in his own voice. He did not hear the captain say anything. Then flight attendant 1 opened the cockpit door and

communicated with the pilots and he could hear that they were doing the emergency checklist.

Per the airline procedures, he was waiting for instructions from the captain to know what side to evacuate. He did not know there was a fire until some passengers yelled "Fire" in the back. Once they realized there was fire (20-30 seconds), they notified the captain, and the captain instructed them to evacuate from the left side.

At that moment, he verified looking through the door window that he could open it and saw people outside. He opened the door and the slide automatically inflated. He mentioned that the door was easy to open, and he had no issues with opening it. He also said that the commands he used were, "evacuate, slide down, run away from the plane." Some people needed help, notably the older people. He did have to carry a lady to the slide and put her on the slide to push her out of the airplane. After that, everyone else started to evacuate. Once everyone was outside, he evacuated himself out of L1. Once out, flight attendant 1 exited and then pilots.

Mr. Cantu mentioned that when he first looked through his door window, he saw a guy standing outside recording with a phone. He could not understand why or who he was and had no idea the situation that happened. Once he was outside, he said that he saw "the truth." He saw the fire and the firefighters. Passengers were asking about their suitcases while recording. He also noticed someone was recording while going down the slide. He stated that he noticed airport personnel had corralled most of the passengers by the time he exited.

He reported no problems with his seatbelt or harness and did not notice any passenger injuries. Only what was reported in the news. He did note that passengers tried taking their bags down the slide. He recalled that he took one away and stated, "it's not important." He did not remember how many people evacuated L1 because he was busy "throwing them out".

He felt his training totally prepared him for this emergency and he saw the emergency procedures in action. He also reiterated that what he saw inside the airplane was vastly different than what he saw outside the airplane, especially after seeing the videos.