

Affidavit of Lawrence E. Pence
Colonel, USAF (Retired)

1. My name is Lawrence E. Pence. My education is as follows:

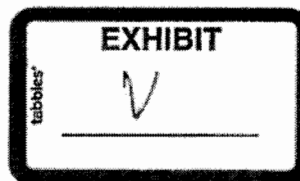
B.S. Aerospace Technology, Kent State University, 1963
M.S. Aerospace Operations Mgmt, Univ. of Southern California, 1970
MBA Quantitative Analysis, Univ. Of Southern California, 1971
Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia, 1974
Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, 1978
Non-degree work: Case Institute of Technology, Massachusetts Institute
of Technology, University of Utah

2. My professional experience is as follows:

Foreign Technology Division, USAF, WPAFB, Ohio; Wiesbaden,
Germany; Saigon, Vietnam, 1963-1969
Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Space Systems, 1971-1974
Intelligence Community Staff, 1974-1977
Defense Intelligence Agency, 1978-1983
Various consultancies with aerospace and intelligence related firms since
retiring from active duty.
Licensed Private Pilot (single-engine land) since 1963

3. Because of my educational background and military experience, I have been asked to comment on certain aspects of the TWA 800 incident. The following comments are based on this background and experience and available public information. I have no additional information not available to the general public, nor any direct first-hand information about the incident or the subsequent investigation and analysis. I was not an eyewitness to the incident. I was not part of the official investigation.

4. On the content of the eyewitness accounts: One of my duties in Vietnam was battle damage assessments of our aircraft in order to increase our understanding of enemy weapons. In performing these assessments, I interviewed numerous pilots and crew members who witnessed missile attacks, both ground-to-air and air-to-air. Their descriptions were quite consistent with the eyewitness descriptions given by those who saw the TWA 800 incident. Of particular note is the internal, sequential consistency of the TWA 800 eyewitnesses, i.e., a bright light rising erratically from ground level toward the aircraft, followed by an explosion and fireball. This description and sequence of events is substantively identical to that given by anyone who ever witnessed a surface-to-air missile attack in Vietnam.



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5. On the CIA animation and the "zoom-climb" theory: I find this highly unlikely and technically not credible. It is of course possible for a fully functional aircraft (even a glider, which has no engine thrust) to "trade airspeed for altitude," or in technical terms, to convert kinetic to potential energy. But this MUST result in a loss of airspeed.

6. In the TWA 800 case, the moment the explosion occurred, and the nose section was severed, there would have been no more engine thrust.

7. For the remaining airframe to have pitched up and gained nearly a mile of altitude, it would have had to abruptly lose airspeed. The ground radar data does not show a loss of airspeed. Further, for a pilotless hulk to have executed such a maneuver would be, I believe, physically impossible.

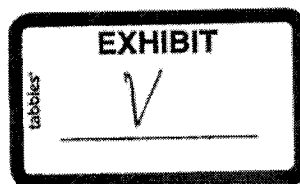
8. A very abrupt pitch-up would have resulted in an immediate high-speed stall with loss of lift and subsequent loss (not gain) of altitude. A less abrupt controlled pitch-up maneuver (virtually impossible in a pilotless, damaged aircraft) would have resulted in excessive G-load on the wings, probably causing failure of the wing structure and immediate loss of altitude.

9. In any case, immediate loss of altitudes after the explosion was what two very well qualified ex-military eyewitnesses who were airborne near TWA 800 saw and reported. Their observations are completely consistent with my own experience. In no case that I can recall from Vietnam was a fatally damaged pilotless aircraft seen to gain altitude after being hit. Observers invariably described the remains as dropping like the proverbial "Simonized anvil."

10. On what didn't happen: The early response of flight safety officials to the TWA 800 incident was that the problem was probably a mechanical (electrical) fault which caused a fuel tank to explode. Why then was not the entire 747 fleet grounded? In the past, when a major design flaw is suspected, or a safety of flight issue arises in a transport aircraft, precautionary grounding of all that type of aircraft until the fault is located and remedied is the accepted course of action. (Recall the Lockheed Electra and British Comet disasters)

11. The final report of the NTSB was equivocal as to the cause of the explosion on TWA 800, but this report was released many months after the incident. The fact remains that early in the investigation a fuel tank explosion was suspected, or at least announced as suspected. If there was the slightest chance that this could occur in another aircraft of the same type, the prudent and responsible action would have been to ground the entire 747 fleet, or at least that portion of the fleet that was of the same series as TWA 800, by means of an Emergency Airworthiness Directive. That didn't happen.

12. The following two paragraphs are direct quotations of my comments from a video made by Accuracy In Media on the TWA 800 incident on the eyewitness accounts and the "zoom-climb" theory respectively.



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13. "Most of my Air Force career was in the intelligence business, dealing with missile and space kinds of issues. I have looked at aircraft that had been hit by missiles, both air-to-air and ground-to-air missiles. I've interviewed pilots who actually saw the missiles and other pilots who were in the area and not necessarily the target, who also gave descriptions of what the missile looked like. These were very consistent with the eyewitness descriptions that I read for people that saw this incident."

14. "I find it highly unlikely, incredible. With the loss of a wing, with the loss of its pilots, cockpit and front end, I believe that it would have tumbled, rolled, and basically dropped like a stone. And this is exactly what the radar data that has subsequently been looked at says happened."

I hereby certify and affirm under penalty of perjury that the forgoing is true.

Date: 5 July 2003



Lawrence E. Pence, Col USAF (Ret)

