

**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.

1        APPEARANCES:

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3        NORM WIEMEYER

4        NTSB Official

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6        TERRY STACEY

7        Trans World Airlines Representative

8

9        LOU BURNS

10       Air Line Pilots Association

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12       SCOTT METCALF

13       Federal Bureau of Investigation

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15       AL CLEMENS

16       Federal Aviation Administration

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I N D E X

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WITNESS:

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

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National Guard.

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(Tape 1, Side B, second interview.)

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(No exhibits were presented or accepted into evidence

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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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