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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 7/19/96

On 7/17/96 [REDACTED] of the New York Air National Guard (ANG), [REDACTED] stationed at [REDACTED] West Hampton Beach, NY, provided the attached interview summary to DET. WAYNE T. PAROLA and DET. KENNETH ENGELHARDT.

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Investigation on 7/18/96 at West Hampton Beach, NY

File # 265A-NY-259028

by DET. WAYNE T. PAROLA
DET. KENNETH ENGELHARDT

Date dictated 7/19/96

000294

18 July 1996 INTERVIEW WITH [REDACTED] 490 [REDACTED] 657 AND [REDACTED] 658
 CONCERNING TWA FLIGHT 800. TAKEN BY FAA INSPECTOR [REDACTED]
 FSDO 15

AT APPROXIMATELY 2030 LOCAL TIME [REDACTED] 490 A MEMBER OF THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD, WHO WAS STANDING ON THE GROUND AT GABRESKI FIELD NOTICED A RED OBJECT FALLING OUT OF THE SKY (THIS OBJECT WAS POSSIBLY ON FIRE BUT FLAMES COULD NOT BE DISCERNED DUE TO HIGH ALTITUDE.) THE OBJECT DESCENDED ON AN ESTIMATED 50 DEGREE TRAJECTORY MOVING WEST TO EAST. MR. [REDACTED] WATCHED THE OBJECT FALL FOR ABOUT 5-8 SECONDS WHEN IT BURST INTO A LARGE SWATCH OF FLAMES. THIS WAS A SUDDEN EVENT, NO SOUND OF AN EXPLOSION WAS HEARD BY MR. [REDACTED] WHEN THE OBJECT SUDDENLY BURST INTO FLAMES IT WAS AT AN ANGLE OF APPROXIMATELY 40 DEGREES ABOVE THE HORIZON WITH MR. [REDACTED] FACING SSW APPROXIMATELY 11NM FROM THE MAIN AREA OF DEBRIS.

[REDACTED] 657 A HH60 FLIGHT ENGINEER AND [REDACTED] 658 A HH60 PILOT WERE FLYING AT AN ALTITUDE OF APPROXIMATELY 300 FEET AT THE END OF RUNWAY 24 AT GABRESKI AIRPORT. THEY WITNESSED WHAT APPEARED TO BE A LARGE SECTION OF DEBRIS (POSSIBLY A SECTION OF WING BOX AND FUSELAGE) ENGULFED IN FLAMES, FALLING VERTICALLY, SPIRALING WITH A CORKSCREW SMOKE TRAIL ABOVE. AS IT DESCENDED A LARGE PIECE ALSO ENGULFED IN FLAMES BROKE OFF. BOTH STRUCK THE WATER AND SANK. THE HELICOPTER WAS ABOUT 7NM FROM THE IMPACT POINT AND IMMEDIATELY PROCEEDED TO THE AREA. APPROXIMATELY 1NM FROM THE IMPACT POINT THEY NOTICED DEBRIS, SOME OF WHICH WAS ON FIRE, STILL RAINING DOWN. [REDACTED] ESTIMATES THAT THE ALTITUDE OF THE LARGE PIECE OF FLAMING DEBRIS WAS FIRST SPOTTED BY THEM AT APPROXIMATELY 4-5000 FEET.

THE MAIN PIECE OF DEBRIS APPARENTLY WAS BUBBLING UP FUEL WHICH IGNITED ON THE SURFACE AND CAUSED A CIRCULAR AREA OF FLAMES APPROXIMATELY 200 FEET IN DIAMETER. THE FLAMES CONTINUED TO SPREAD AS MORE FUEL CAME TO THE SURFACE. THERE WERE A FEW BODIES NOTICED IN THIS AREA. APPROXIMATELY 50 FEET FROM THE BURNING AREA, [REDACTED] NOTICED A SECTION OF AIRCRAFT - 658 POSSIBLY BELONGING TO THE TAIL SECTION. IT WAS WHITE WITH SOME RED COLOR. THIS SECTION SANK APPROXIMATELY 1-2 MINUTES LATER AND WAS NOT ON FIRE AT THE TIME. THE CO-ORDINATES OF THIS POSSIBLE RUDDER OR STAB SECTION SANK AT WAS N40.39.0, W07237.63. APPROXIMATELY 1/2 NM SOUTHWEST OF THE FLAMING DEBRIS AREA AN ELONGATED AREA OF SMALL PIECES OF FLOATING DEBRIS APPROXIMATELY 300 FEET IN LENGTH. THIS DEBRIS WAS NOT ON FIRE AND CONSISTED OF STYROFOAM LIKE MATERIAL ALONG WITH A FUSELAGE WINDOW SECTION. IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA SURROUNDING AND AMONG THIS DEBRIS WERE ABOUT 20-30 BODIES. THESE BODIES SHOWED EVIDENCE OF HIGH IMPACT DAMAGE WITH CLOTHING BLOWN OFF AND DISMEMBERMENT. NONE OF THE BODIES HAD LIFE JACKETS ON. AT LEAST ONE AND POSSIBLY TWO AIRCRAFT SLIDE RAFTS WERE ALSO NOTICED NEAR THIS AREA OF DEBRIS ONE WAS APPROXIMATELY HALF INFLATED AND HAD ITS LIGHTS ACTIVATED.

ADDENDUM: I, [REDACTED] 659 AT HOME APPROXIMATELY 15 NM FROM THE CRASH SITE AT APPROXIMATE 2028 LOCAL I FELT AND HEARD A MUFFLED EXPLOSION WHICH RATTLED THE WINDOWS OF MY HOUSE AND WHICH I ASSUMED WAS A SONIC BOOM

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription

07/24/96

[REDACTED] New York Air National Guard (NYANG) was interviewed at the headquarters of the NYANG by Special Agents Joseph P. Fanning and Kurt B. Huertas, who identified themselves as Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), on July 20, 1996, [REDACTED] was re-interviewed by Special Agent Fanning and New York City Police Department (NYCPD) Detective Thomas Corrigan on a routine follow-up interview. [REDACTED] then supplied the following information:

[REDACTED] Woodbury, New York (NY). [REDACTED] usually does two weekday a week shifts at the NYANG and an occasional weekend.

On Wednesday evening, July 17, 1996, [REDACTED] was involved in a routine training flight at the Westhampton NYANG base where he is assigned. He was the engineer on an HH60 helicopter. The HH6 was being flown at the time by co-pilot [REDACTED] who was sitting in the left seat. [REDACTED] was making the second pass at a drop sight when he heard [REDACTED] over the radio say, [REDACTED] is that a pyro?" [REDACTED] explained that pyro is a term for a flare. They were going to be working that night with a HC-130, but no mention had been made of flares being dropped in the initial briefing. [REDACTED] was also in the cockpit with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] then looked up and saw a fire erupting and spreading out in the sky to the south and dropping down. The helicopter then informed the tower, who had also seen the fire, that they were proceeding towards it. [REDACTED] reported it took about eight (8) seconds for the major part of the fire to hit the water.

Richardson's initial thought was that two small planes had collided at the beach. When the helicopter got to the beach, the fire was still out to sea about five (5) miles. During the flight out to the site, [REDACTED] was still in the back of the helicopter getting ready for a rescue.

Investigation on _____ at Westhampton, New York

File # 265A-NY-259028 ^{ees} ~~259028~~ 15
by SA Kurt B. Huertas; NYCPD Detective Thomas Corrigan
SA Joseph P. Fanning (JPF:amo) *JPF*

Date dictated 07/20/96

265A-NY-259028

Continuation of FD-302 of [REDACTED]

. On _____

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When the helicopter arrived at the scene, debris was still falling down and it was [REDACTED] job to keep an eye out for falling debris. After the debris had finished falling, the C-130, which also had been in the air, flew over the scene and dropped a marker flare. After reviewing the debris, which included a tail section and window panel, the helicopter notified the NYANG tower that an airplane was down. The tower radioed back that Kennedy Tower had lost a 747.

[REDACTED] saw a large group of bodies and an oval debris field 100 by 300 feet in the water. The helicopter then flew back to the base to pick up [REDACTED] Pararescue EMT. After picking up [REDACTED] the helicopter returned to the crash scene. In the ten (10) minutes it took to go back to get [REDACTED] and return, the group of bodies had already drifted about four (4) miles to the south/southwest. [REDACTED] reported they overflew the area for awhile, attempting to assist the Coast Guard. No survivors were observed so they attempted no rescue operations.

The explosion went from west to east. [REDACTED] knew at the time it was a fuel fire. The smoke trail from the dropping debris' was black and it cork screwed downward.

The HC-130 that was up in the air at the time did not deploy any flares prior to the explosion. It did deploy over eighty flares after the explosion at the request of the Coast Guard.

The following descriptive data for [REDACTED] was obtained by interview and observation:

Date of Birth:
Social Security
Account Number:
Address:

Home telephone:
Height:
Weight:
Hair:
Eyes:

