NYC 9/11 Public Portal Document

Searching for Crash Answers

INVESTIGATION from A6

for the tiny tornadoes that trail from the wingtips of an aircraft, would be expected to dissipate within two minutes, experts say. Predicting how the wake turbulence would behave "is a very inexact science," said Bob Ober, a pilot for a major airline.

"It would have been legal, but if conditions were just right, it might have remained out there and not dissipated," one air traffic control source said.

The tail and rudder section were moved yesterday to a hanger at Floyd Bennett Field in a white Sanitation Department truck, while the two shattered engines — one of which landed in a gas station parking lot, the other in a backyard — were taken to Kennedy Airport. They will eventually wind up at an American Airlines center in Tulsa.

Last night, investigators in a Washington lab began to analyze the data from the flight data recorder, which records altitude, speed and instrument settings, after a delay because of damage to the box.

Investigators also continued to try to analyze a sound that was picked up from the cockpit in the FAA's air traffic control center in Westbury. The sound may have come after the cockpit voice recorder shut off. The recorder is powered by the engines that fell off the plane, but the pilots' radio has a battery backup.

The noise sounded like "electrical interference," said one investigative source. It might have been the breakup of the plane, the source said.

At City Hall, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani suggested a joint memorial service for the two neighborhoods hit the hardest by the crash: the Dominican enclave of Washington Heights and the mostly Irish and Jewish community of Belle Harbor. The mayor said the two neighborhoods — one of four-story walkups and street ball, the other of single-family homes and lawn decorations — have a "great deal in common."

"It occurred to me it would be a quite beautiful thing if we could bring both communities together," he said. "They share a great faith in God, they have a very strong reliance on family and very strong connections to each other and a very strong work ethic. These communities are much more similar than they are different."

And now they share a "massive disproportionate loss."

A time and place for the memorial have not been set.

In Washington Heights, a lonely parade of mourners wound their way to the Church of the Incarnation on St. Nicholas Avenue, bearing candles, which flickered in the wind. Onlookers nodded their respects.

The thoughts of Jennifer Aracena, 17, a junior at Norman Thomas High School, were on her mother and her aunt. After Sept. 11, she made a vow to love her mother more. Aracena said she was overwhelmed by Monday's disaster because her aunt, Estella Fajardo, had just missed the flight because of an appointment.

In a live address broadcast to the Dominican Republic from 179th Street and Audubon Avenue, Gov. George Pataki said: "We understand what a horrible sense of loss this is. More than the numbers, it's the individuals."

And in Washington, Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) sent a letter to President George W. Bush yesterday asking that New York's official disaster declaration be expanded to include the crash of Flight 587. That declaration would make the Rockaways eligible for full federal assistance.

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