



14-08

March 26, 2014

## *Trading Safety*

On April 9, 2012, the DPA posted an article titled [ALPA Safety and Security Lacks Relevance](#). Why bring up yet another DPA misrepresentation that is now two years old? Read on.

The referenced article takes an actual safety-related event, but then goes on to fabricate a story, leaving the reader with the implication that Delta and ALPA conspired to cover up the event.

In the article, the DPA claimed that this incident took place in December 2011 and:

*"...hundreds of Delta Passengers either took photos similar to these or actually experienced the event first hand."*

*"Attempting to cover up events or minimize them is no longer a valid way of dealing with them."*

*"As of this article, this engine failure has not been communicated to the line pilot and no reason for the failure or solution has been provided."*

*"...reports indicate that the explosion shook the ATL ramp area."*

These claims are, in fact, contrary to the public record concerning this incident, which was made available by the NTSB at this [link](#), and reproduced below:

<p>NTSB Identification: <b>ENG12IA001</b> Scheduled 14 CFR Part 121: Air Carrier Incident occurred Monday, October 10, 2011 in Atlanta, GA Aircraft: BOEING 757-251, registration: N553NW Injuries: 182 Uninjured.</p> <p>This is preliminary information, subject to change, and may contain errors. Any errors in this report will be corrected when the final report has been completed. NTSB investigators traveled in support of this investigation and used data obtained from various sources to prepare this aircraft incident report.</p> <p>On October 10, 2011 at about 3:04 eastern daylight time, a Delta Air Lines Boeing 757-200, N553NW, powered by 2 Pratt &amp; Whitney PW2037(M) turbofan engines, experienced a No. 1 (left) engine failure during takeoff roll at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Atlanta, Georgia (ATL). The</p>
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flight crew reported that, when at about 60 kias, they heard a loud bang and noted left engine fire indications. The captain aborted the takeoff. The airplane was taxied back to the gate without further incident and the passengers were deplaned normally. The flight was a regularly scheduled passenger service from ATL to Dallas Ft. Worth International Airport (DFW), Ft. Worth, Texas. No injuries were reported, and there was minor damage to the airplane.

A post-event inspection found that the left engine diffuser case was ruptured. The airplane and engine damage was documented October 12-13, 2011 at Delta Tech Ops, Atlanta, Georgia.

The engine was removed on October 12. A disassembly investigation took place October 18-21, 2011, and parts were shipped to the National Transportation Safety Board's materials lab for further investigation. This public NTSB report does not give even the slightest hint that our airline or our union were "attempting to cover up" anything. To the contrary, the event was well chronicled in the November/December 2011 *All Pilot ASAP Summary*, after the engine inspection in which ALPA safety volunteers participated, and made available to all pilots.

Importantly, as of this writing the NTSB has still not released a final report. Note also that while the report was *preliminary*, it was made available to the entire traveling public the day after the event occurred, via the NTSB website and other flight safety websites which track daily aircraft incidents. This public report was updated after the inspection in early October 2011, a full *five months* before the DPA made their inflammatory claims.

According to the DPA article, which can be read (including photos) in its entirety using the link above, "*The following photos depict a damaged B-757 on the ATL ramp last December.*" The photos were in fact examined using a free browser plugin, and the EXIF data included in the two photos indicates that the pictures were taken on the ramp (GPS) using a Samsung Galaxy SGH-T959 phone at around 16:47 on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the same date and time of the publicly available NTSB report, and not (as DPA alleges) in December.

And there's the rub. We are all professional pilots, and we undoubtedly have differences of opinion from time to time, but as professionals we also work very hard to take safety of flight out of the political and disciplinary realm.

In April 2012, for the sake of acquiring a few more cards, DPA was willing to trade away 80 years of continuous and evolving safety culture. They propagated a lie, which undermined our safety programs and unfairly maligned our colleagues who work every day in these vitally important programs.

*Schedule With Safety* isn't just an appeal to ethics; it is the foundation of the Air Line Pilots Association. Many of the Key Men who formed ALPA later died in crashes, and safety has never been a chit to be bartered away for political advantage. Today ALPA's Air Safety Organization is the largest non-government organization dedicated to advancements in safety of flight - your dues at work, keeping the skies safe for pilots and our passengers. This basic lesson is lost on the DPA, an organization that would manipulate the facts of an incident involving our own pilots and aircraft to achieve its narrow objectives.

So why address a safety incident that occurred over two years ago? Because the DPA is once again willing to trade safety away in the effort to generate a few more cards. The latest link in an unbroken chain of bizarre statements, the DPA released another message on March 19, 2014. Here are some pertinent excerpts:

*“Utter shock is the best way to describe the reaction to DPA presence by many attending the DAL Quarterly Instructor meeting.”*

*“DPA expressed the need for all instructors and line check airmen to be especially aware of new hires and their full right to submit a DPA Card and vote in the future election.”*

And once again, safety is utterly, shockingly traded for political gain. The most vulnerable of the Delta pilots - the new hires dealing with initial qualification, IOE, and probation - must now wonder if they will get the hard sell from the small number of DPA supporting instructors and line check pilots who are also charged with their evaluation?

The Delta pilots should feel nothing less than utter shock for the blistering speed at which the DPA is willing to prejudice the interests of the very pilots it seeks to represent in order to further its representational ambitions. As professionals, we all know there is no room for personal advocacy, union-related or otherwise, in our safety sensitive workplace.

ALPA, and our ALPA-represented instructors and line check pilots have always respected the special circumstance of our new hire pilots, and this is a line that you will never see us cross, and for good reason. Safety should never be traded.