

Working Draft - Informative Speech

- Topic: Causes of the TWA Flight 800 Crash
- Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the possible causes of the TWA airline disaster.
- Central Idea: The story of the crash has left the front page of our newspapers. We still don't know exactly what happened. In this speech, three main theories will be discussed: A bomb brought down the plane, a missile caused the explosion, or mechanical failure was to blame.

Introduction

I. (Attention Getter) On Wednesday, July 17th - 1996 - at 8:48pm, a Boeing 747, carrying 230 passengers suddenly vanished from radar. This was TWA flight 800. For some reason, that is unknown at this time, the plane blew up and crashed into the Atlantic Ocean near Long Island, killing everyone on board. **TITLE**

II. (Audience Adaptation) Perhaps you have seen reports about the crash on TV or read about it in a newspaper or magazine. TWA flight 800 was on its way to France when there was an explosion on board and the plane plummeted more than two miles into the ocean. Investigators have to search an area over 500 miles wide and 120 to 200 feet deep to recover the wreckage. **FLIGHT PATH**

III. (Purpose) Due to the massive area to be searched, investigators have yet to determine the exact cause of this crash. Today I am going to discuss three possible causes of this explosion. **SEARCH AREA**

IV. (Preview) Investigators have released three theories to what may have happened on that tragic night.

- A. The first theory suggests a bomb brought down the Boeing 747.
- B. Others believe a missile destroyed the airplane.
- C. The third theory suggests mechanical failure caused the aircraft to crash. **THREE THEORIES**

TRANSITION: According to the July 29th issue of Time Magazine, eye witness Chris Baur saw an orange fireball, two explosions, and a waterfall of flames spiraling down.

Body

- I. One explanation of this disaster is that a bomb blew up on board the flight causing it to crash. **BOMB**
- A. However, according to the July 29th issue of Newsweek, all the bags on board were accounted for and each one matched a passenger.
1. A bomb could have gotten onto the plane if a suicide bomber was on board with a bag full of plastic explosives to get through the x-ray machines.
 2. It is also possible that a member of the ground crew could have slipped a bomb onto the plane. About 50 ground-crew members had access to the plane before it took off. **GROUND CREW**
- B. Chemical traces were found on pieces of the aircraft suggesting that a bomb brought down TWA flight 800. The September 2nd issue of Newsweek reported that investigators discovered microscopic traces of PETIN, which is used in plastic explosives. **TEST TUBES**
- C. However, bombs are not known to destroy airlines. According to the August 12th issue of Time Magazine, in about 75% of all plane bombings, the aircrafts have managed to return to the airport with minimal loss of life. **CRIPPLED PLANE**

TRANSITION: If a bomber is to blame, the death toll will be the highest ever by a single person or group in the United States.

- II. Initially, investigators focused not on a bomb, but a missile. **MISSILE**
- A. Eyewitnesses thought they saw a bright arch going toward the jet before it blew up. FAA officials also reported that a strange radar blip crossed the TWA craft as it vanished from the screen
- B. The type of missile that could have hit the aircraft is called a heat seeking missile. According to the August issue of Air and Space magazine, in other cases involving heat seeking missiles the engines of the plane were struck. However, in this case, the engines showed no evidence of missile damage.

INTERNAL SUMMARY: Investigators continue to search for clues to whether a bomb or a missile brought down TWA flight 800. However, they also are considering mechanical failure as a reason for the disaster. **BROKEN MACHINE**

III. Top investigation officials said that it is possible that the 25 year old Boeing 747 had self-destructed. But there was no hint of mechanical troubles.

A. The September 2nd issue of Newsweek reported that the control room at the airport had received no "Mayday" call from the cockpit.

B. Investigators recovered the Black Box, which tape records all of the conversations in the cockpit. The tape ends with a very brief, loud noise. Had the plane suffered a mechanical failure, the 747's records would have picked up some instrument readings, not to mention the last words of the pilots. **BLACK BOX**

C. It is possible that some fatal flaw in flight 800's jumbo jet brought it down. But other 747's that have been crippled by catastrophic mechanical failure managed to stay in the air for some time as their pilots struggled for control.

Conclusion

I. (Review) Today, I have informed you about three possible reasons TWA flight 800 crashed.

A. First, I discussed the possibility that the airplane was brought down from a bomb.

B. Second, I talk about the chance of a missile bringing down the plane.

C. Finally, I discussed the possibility that mechanical failure brought down the aircraft. **THREE THEORIES**

II. (Closing Statement) Will we ever know what really happened that tragic night over the Atlantic Ocean? Only time will tell. Investigators will continue to search for clues to what caused TWA flight 800 to crash, killing all 230 passengers. For while all the families, friends and the entire nation mourns the loss of life, the answers cannot come soon enough. **KEY WEST SUNSET**

Bibliography

[List sources here in proper APA or MLA format. See APA style or MLA style for more information: <http://www.apastyle.org/electmedia.html>]

"Was TWA 800 Shot Down By a Military Missile?" retrieved June 10, 2006, from <http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/RANCHO/CRASH/TWA/twa.html> .

