

December 18, 2015

Statement of Captain Steven E. Sague'

Southwest Airlines Flight 31 (HOU-BNA)

Date of Accident: December 15, 2015 (Approximately 1725 CST)

Aircraft S/N: N649

NTSB File Number:

December 15, 2015

For this trip I was paired with First Officer Doug Vance. It was a three day sequence starting on December 15. I had flown with Doug once before and found him to be an excellent pilot with whom I got along with well. The first flight was from our domicile in Dallas (DAL) to Houston (HOU) and was uneventful. The second flight was from HOU to Nashville (BNA). The accident occurred on the second flight that day. The weather enroute was forecast to be a non-issue (and was good) and the weather at BNA was forecast to be visual conditions. The ATIS for our arrival into BNA was calling for visual approaches to 20 L/C/R.

Accident Flight 31

HOU to BNA: Departure, takeoff, enroute, descent and landing were normal. Once in range I was able to visually identify the BNA Airport and runway 20R. We proceeded with a normal visual approach and experienced a good touchdown within touchdown zone. After landing on 20R, the taxi clearance from BNA ground control was B-2, B, T-3, 31, T-4 to the gate. The FO and I discussed this taxi route during our Before Descent briefing. Our EFB 10-9 pages were reviewed.

The taxi via B was dark and I used landing lights to increase visibility to make the right turn on to T-3. We crossed runway 31 and as we taxied down T-3, I turned off the landing lights after exiting runway 31 using the taxi light only. T-3 was dark and the bright lights from the terminal ramp made it difficult to see. The T-4 intersection was very dark and I was looking to find the left turn to the ramp. Within seconds the aircraft departed the taxiway and rolled down an embankment and came to a stop.

The nose of the aircraft dropped to the ground. The aircraft was nose down and banked to the right. The APU was on the bus and I shut down the engines. The FO called BNA Ground and informed them of our location. We then performed the evacuation checklist and as the flaps were

extending a loud configuration horn sounded which made communication impossible (because the nose wheel was up). I temporarily left the APU running. I was on the PA trying to instruct FAs to remain seated but was unable to communicate with them because of the horn. The forward flight attendant was knocking on the cockpit door but we did not open the cockpit door because we were still assessing the situation and the horn was blaring.

In my discussion with the flight attendants after the event I learned that they had initiated the evacuation when they could not contact us (horn interference) and that they assumed we were incapacitated. They deployed the right forward and the right and left aft galley slides and accomplished the passenger evacuation.

After completing the Evacuation Checklist, the FO and I came out of the cockpit as the evacuation was completing. I surveyed from the forward right door and then returned to the cockpit. Using the radio still powered by the battery, I contacted BNA SWA Ops for transportation and other issues.

I understand from the FO that he spoke with BNA ATC Ops Agent Greg Patterson and learned that the taxiway lights were turned off and that Mr. Patterson radioed ATC to turn them on.

The passengers were all accounted for and in busses as we were taken over to Ops.

Personal Information

Pilot Certificate Number: [REDACTED]

Type Ratings: 737

First Class Medical Dated: July, 2015 (must wear corrective lenses)

SWA Base: DAL

Prior to joining Southwest I served more than 20 years in the United States Air Force. After graduating from the Air Force Academy in 1979 and completing pilot training I flew the B-52G, the T-37 as an Instructor pilot, and then became a B-52G/H Aircraft Commander, Instructor pilot, Standards Evaluation pilot, and served in both Desert Shield and Desert Storm. I received a DFC during this time. I have almost 5,000 hours of military flight time.

Upon retiring from the USAF, I was hired by Southwest Airlines in 1999. I flew as a Boeing 737 First Officer until 2005 when I upgraded to Captain. At Southwest I have approximately 14,000 hours in the 737, approximately 9,000 of which are as Pilot In Command.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Captain Steven E. Sagye