


Complaint Categories
[Shortcuts](#)
[Home](#) | [Complaints](#) | [Feature of the week](#) | [United's record](#) | [About this site](#)

Previous Features

More safety concerns with maintenance work

A brief history:

- [San Diego news item](#) on dangers of outsourcing
- [safety concerns](#) raised earlier on Untied.com
- [CBS news clip](#) on dangers of outsourcing and UAL's actions against whistleblowers
- [initial feature](#) on Tim Hafer

This log from the Unimatic maintenance display for troubleshooting work was relayed to Untied.com from a mechanic at LAX. Highlights in red are the alarming sections. The aircraft in question (United 8180) is a 747-400 that was flying in March with the control rod missing from the left aileron power control unit (PCU). There is discussion among insiders that this was caused by maintenance work performed by Timco, one of the third vendor sites at the [center of another scandal](#).

What is perhaps most frightening is that despite this very serious flight incident, the foreman who "signed off" on the aircraft did so without performing any mechanical work to correct the problem, after it was diverted to Ontario Airport, California.

Some important questions: Why was there no maintenance record (MR) associated with this power control unit? How can anyone be sure that this critical component is working effectively? Where is the missing control rod? Did Timco inspect it? If so, where was the inspector?

Note that the log is in reverse chronological order so it may be easier to read from the bottom up.

```
AMSDIS / 8180 / ALL/ 27 - / F / 4422001 ACFT DATA DISPLAY
4422002 29MAR LAX ACP :DURING DESCENT AT 14K', WITH A-P ON AND
ALSO OFF, USED SPEED BRAKE AND NOTICED CONTROL WHEEL TURNING
LEFT. STATUS PAGE SHOWS FLIGHT SPOILERS EXTENDED ON LEFT SIDE, L
WING ONLY. WITH SB HANDLE IN RETRACTED POSITION, L SIDE SPOILERS
RETRACTED AND CONTROL NORMAL. CONSULTED WITH SAM & DIVERTED TO
ONT. - ITEM ROLLED FORWARD :SEE REF4412002 ACCOMPLISHED TEST
PER MM27-61-00 PG501.SEE REF 4422001 ACCOMPLISHED TEST ITEM C
MM 27-61-00 PG 501.ALL SPOILERS CHECKED GOOD.ON FERRY FLIGHT
FROM ONT TO LAX CREW HAD NO FLIGHT CONTROL GRIPES.A LL SURFACES
TRIMED TO ZERO.TALKED TO LM ROGER.AIRCRAFT OK FOR SE RVICE LAXMM
ROKOSZ
INSP: MR:N POS: ATA:274000-84
```

```
AMSDIS / 8180 / ALL/ 27 - / F / 4412002 ACFT DATA DISPLAY
4422001 29MAR LAX ACP :SPOILER CONTROL SYSTEM OPERATIONAL TEST
ITEM C THERMAL RELIEF VALVE LEAKAGE CHECK NEEDS TO BE
ACCOMPLISHED O N MM REF 27-61-00 PAGE 501. - ITEM ROLLED FORWARD
:PER MM 27-61-00PG 501 ALL SPOILERS CHECKED GOOD .COULD NOT
PUSH UP ANY PANELS ALL PCU COLD.
INSP: MR:N POS: ATA:276300-01
```

```
AMSDIS / 8180 / ALL/ 27 - / F / 4042004 ACFT DATA DISPLAY
4412002 28MAR ONT ACP :REF TO LOG2 NEED TO PERFORM SPOILER
```

CONTROL SYSTEM TEST PER MM 27-61-00 PG 501 :PERFORM SYSTEM
 OPERATIONAL TEST FR OM ST EPS D1 ON PAGE 502 THRU ITEM 11 ON
 PAGE 505 MM 27-61-00. T HERMAL RELIEF VALVE LEAKAGE CHECK ITEM C
 NOT ACCOMPLISHED. ()ITEM SHOULD READ (PERFORMED) INSTEAD OF
 (PREFORM). STILL NEED T O PREFORM THERMAL RELIEF VALVE LEAKAGE
 CHECK ITEM C.
 IRDATA MECH: CORTES LIC: 139245 AL: UA
 INSP: MR:N IRDATA POS: ATA:276000-01

AMSDIS / 8180 / ALL/ 27 - / F / 4042003 ACFT DATA DISPLAY
 4042004 19MAR LAX ACP- :LM6936 LEFT INBD AILERON PCU
 DUE HISTORY OF MISSING HARDWARE FROM THE LEFT INBOARD AILERON
 PCU, AT THE FIRST MAINTENANCE OPPORTUNITY AND WITHOUT DISRUPTING
 SCHEDULE RECORD THE PART NUMBER, MR NUMBER, SERIAL NUMBER AND
 THE DASH NUMBER OF THE LEFT INBOARD AILERON PCU. PAUL WHITELEY
 LHRLM 18MAR03
 :LH INBOARD ELEVATOR PCU PA RT NUMBER 3170120-6. SERIAL NUMBER
 90X0719. SPECIFICATION NUMBER 60B00050-5. FOUND NO MR NUMBER ON
 UNIT.
 INSP: MR:N POS: ATA:271400-01

AMSDIS / 8180 / ALL/ 27 - / F / 3972004 ACFT DATA DISPLAY
 4042003 19MAR LAX ACP- :LM6924 RH AIL PCU INPUT CHECKS
 DUE TO FINDINGS IN REF TO SEQ 3972002, AT FIRST MAINT OPPT GAIN
 ACCESS TO RH INBD AILERON PCU INPUT ROD AND QUADRANT AND VERIFY
 SAFETY AND SECURITY OF FOLLOWING: REF IPC 27-11-11-02,PG1, ITEM
 35 PUSHROD AND CHECK HARDWARE AT BOTH ENDS FOR SECURITY AND
 SAFETIES. NOTE NUTS MAY BE SELF-LOCKING CASTELLATED WITH BOLTS
 DRILLED FOR COTTER PINS. IF SO VERIFY COTTER PINS ARE INSTALLED.
 ALSO PLEASE NOTE IN SIGN-OFF WHAT CONFIGURATION NUT-BOLT AND
 SAFETY IS ACTUALLY INSTALLED. SFOLM THAXTER
 :VERIFIED COTTER PINS INSTALLED ON NUTS.FWD BOLT BOLT HEAD ON
 TOP,AFT BOLT BOLT HEAD OUTBOA RD SIDE.
 INSP: MR:N POS: ATA:271400-01

AMSDIS / 8180 / ALL/ 27 - / F / 3972003 ACFT DATA DISPLAY
 3972004 15MAR LAX ACP :COMPLETE INSPECTION OF AMIS ITEM
 3972002: :ON TAXI DOWN FOUN D LT INBOARD AILERON STUCK IN DOWN
 POSITION NO MOVEMENT WITH WHE EL.FOUND INPUT ROD TO POWER
 PACKAGE NOT CONN. HARDWARE MISSING . REPLACED HARDWARE REF IPC
 27-11-11-02.PG1 ITEM 10,20,25.ACCOMPLI SHED OPS OF AILERON AND
 SPOILERS .NO EVIDENCE OF 107441#2 SPOILER BYPASS PER MM
 27-60-00. :SEE PTT-SEQ397200 3. INSPECTED PWR PKG BAY FOR
 DISCREPANCIES. NONE NOTED.
 INSP: MR:N POS: ATA:271000-40

AMSDIS / 8180 / ALL/ 27 - / F / 3972002 ACFT DATA DISPLAY
 3972003 15MAR LAX ACP :COMPLETE INSPECTION OF AMIS ITEM
 3972002: :ON TAXI DOWN FOUN D LT INBOARD AILERON STUCK IN DOWN
 POSITION NO MOVEMENT WITH WHE EL.FOUND INPUT ROD TO POWER
 PACKAGE NOT CONN. HARDWARE MISSING . REPLACED HARDWARE REF IPC
 27-11-11-02.PG1 ITEM 10,20,25.ACCOMPLI SHED OPS OF AILERON AND
 SPOILERS .NO EVIDENCE OF 107441 :INSP OF INPUT ROD TO PWR PKG
 CONNECTION.
 INSP: MR:N POS: ATA:271000-40

AMSDIS / 8180 / ALL/ 27 - / F / 2312006 ACFT DATA DISPLAY
 3972002 15MAR LAX RPL :PER CREW-TRIM DISCREPANCY,WITH AUTO
 PILOTS OFF 0 UNITS RUDDER TRIM AND 1.5 UNITS LEFT AILERON TRIM
 (20 DEG) WINGS ARE LEVEL, LEFT AILERON NOTED AS DROOPING INTO
 AIRFLOW WITH CORRESPONDING NBR 2 LEFT SPOILER FLOAT. LHRLM
 MORGAN. :ON TAXI DOWN FOUN D LT INBOARD AILERON STUCK IN DOWN
 POSITION NO MOVEMENT WITH WHE EL.FOUND INPUT ROD TO POWER
 PACKAGE NOT CONN. HARDWARE MISSING . REPLACED HARDWARE REF IPC
 27-11-11-02.PG1 ITEM 10,20,25.ACCOMPLI SHED OPS OF AILERON AND
 SPOILERS .NO EVIDENCE OF 107441#2 SPOILER BYPASS PER MM
 27-60-00.
 INSP: 103123 MR:N POS: ATA:271000-74

AMSDIS / 8180 / ALL/ 27 - / F / ACFT DATA DISPLAY
 2312006 26FEB ORD SVC :STAB GREEN BAND EICAS MSG. SAMC PAUL
 :SERVICED NOSE STR UT TO PROPER LEVEL.
 INSP: MR:N POS: ATA:274000-84

END OF REQUEST AMSDIS / 8181 / ALL / 27 - / F /

February 28, 2003

United Airlines Employees Sue ESOP, Committee

CHICAGO - A group of United Airlines (NYSE:UAL) employees today filed a lawsuit against the airline's employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) and its trustees, claiming those charged with protecting the interests of the employee-owners failed in their duties, costing the employee-owners billions of dollars.

Filed in US District Court in Chicago by Seattle attorney Steve Berman, the suit claims the UAL ESOP committee - all employees of UAL - was not objective in its decision to hold UAL stock as it plummeted in value even before the September 11, 2001 attack, which further weakened the stock price.

Further details are available [here](#).

February 2, 2003

Further information has been brought to our attention by Mr. Tim Hafer, a former Warranty Coordinator with UAL, regarding maintenance safety at UAL. The big questions are why the FAA has allowed the airline to get away with such serious safety violations with only a minor slap on the wrist and how the airline managed to terminate employees following federally protected whistleblowing actions?

Update: On March 3, Tim Hafer was notified that an amicus brief was filed on his behalf by the Office of the Solicitor of The Department of Labor, opposing United Airline's motion for a bankruptcy stay of his whistleblowing case under the Wendell Ford Airline Aviation Act. Stay tuned for further updates.

I was employed at United Airlines' Maintenance Base in San Francisco as a Warranty Coordinator in the Contract Administration Department (SFOOX). This department is responsible for the administration of contracts with outside vendors performing overhauls of United aircraft.

My duties were to extract repair records from UAL's Aircraft Maintenance Information System (AMIS) using SQL programming language. I would analyze these records in order to file warranty claims with Boeing and Airbus. In this capacity, I uncovered numerous incidents of unlicensed personnel illegally signing off repair work on United aircraft at third party vendor sites -- BE Aerospace/Tramco in Washington, Mobile Aerospace in Alabama, and Timco in North Carolina.

This outsourcing resulted in several dangerous incidents reported in [Forbes Magazine](#) in April 2002. Another airline was less fortunate: the ValueJet Disaster of a few years ago was attributed to negligence during a similar third party overhaul of their aircraft.

The following timeline provides a summary of how UAL and the FAA responded to the evidence of these dangerous practices. More details are available by following the links.

- December 2000: a co-worker in my department (SFOOX) explained to me

that he was being told to sign off maintenance write-ups on aircraft being overhauled by third party vendors.

- January 2001: I began to generate SQL reports of this activity from the AMIS electronic database. I extracted three separate reports of this from the database involving flight control, autopilot, and deferred maintenance write-ups, which did not refer to any written job card or licensed mechanic.
- February 2001: I contacted the FAA Hotline in Washington D.C. to report my concerns, turning over approximately 10 pounds of documentation to support my claims.
- March 5, 2001: I was paged by FAA Inspector Glenn Orfitelli regarding my hotline incident report. Two hours later I met with him and Inspector Tony Campbell at the FAA Certificate Management Office in Burlingame, CA. They told me that they would request from UAL the written documentation to the signoffs in the reports that I handed over to them.
- March 19, 2001: The FAA responds to my concerns, expressing their appreciation. The letter states that there were some inconsistencies found between the original documents and the electronic records in AMIS.
- March 26, 2001: The FAA contacts Mr. D.K. Loo, Director of Quality Assurance for United Airlines at San Francisco International Airport, regarding disparities noted in an audit of maintenance records of UAL's aircraft.
- March 29, 2001: I called Tony Campbell regarding this letter. He said that they found numerous instances where UAL could not come up with any written documentation. He said that he had just sent a letter to UAL stating that they must start transcribing everything from the written cards into the AMIS electronic record.
- May 15, 2001: I received a call from Inspector Tony Campbell telling me that he gave my name to Quality Assurance Representative Mason Rashid at UAL as a point of contact to explain how SFOOX was able to have unlicensed personnel sign off mechanic maintenance work. He said that the investigation was "gung ho" with a lot of UAL "head honchos" involved.
- May 30, 2001: I was terminated by UAL for violating confidentiality policy.
- Nov. 26, 2001: The FAA proposes a \$200,000 civil penalty against United Airlines for alleged violations of regulations, based on the documentation I provided.
- 2002: United settled the case with the FAA for \$33,000 and TIMCO reimbursed the airline.
- January 2003: In further cost-cutting efforts, UAL moves to expand outsourcing of maintenance work beyond its current cap at 20%.
- January 30, 2003: I sent a detailed letter to Kenneth M. Mead, Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Transportation, outlining my plight and criticising the ineffectiveness of the Wendell Ford Aviation Act, which is supposed to protect, rather than punish, whistleblowers.

December 4, 2002

Here's the text of a complaint sent by a premier passenger to United's CEO Glenn Tilton, in advance of a FedEx box of trash he collected from his seat in first class. Interestingly, this letter generated a telephone call from Mr. Tilton in response to the complaint.

I hope that your Holiday was better than mine. Certainly it **MUST** have been if you managed to avoid flying on United Air Lines. What started out the day before thanksgiving at 630 am at DCA was bad enough, but yesterday was the final slap in the face from an airline that really **DOES** need to consider suspending operations, if only long enough to fire several of your employees who are so unhappy with their jobs that they manage to transfer it to your **C U S T O M E R S** (get that? **US**you remember? The ones who **P A Y** to fly your airline?)

I'll dispense with the day before nightmares. Yesterday was the straw that broke the camels back. You will be receiving a federal express tomorrow with some of the TRASH that was IN MY FIRST CLASS SEAT. The one that by the way, I paid a full FUA fare for, Not an upgrade.

I am a Lufthansa Senator which is the equivalent of your 1K. And a whole HELL of a lot of that flying is on United. I left Atlanta yesterday on flight 1787 at 4:19 PM on a B737300. ZILCH on the service. A drink during predeparture and then the flight attendant, once up in the air "would anyone like anything else to drink before we land?" EXCUSE ME! BUT the last time I heard, a flight in duration of 1:45 minutes was at the very least a full beverage service, NOT a "you've had one on the ground don't bother me now" HOWEVER, the "jumpseater" who was seated up front with the working flight attendant (a true embarrassment to United, by the way) probably interfered with the working flight attendant. Certainly all the rest of us in first class had to listen to her whine and complain about the woes of being on "reserve" and "not getting my hours in" and "being based in Chicago and living in Atlanta" being a "real BITCH on the sleeptime" (her words, not mine) And really. A skin tight white tshirt under a short grey halter top that reminded me more of Brittany Spears? And at Least Brittany wears a bra! Skin tight leotard that passed for pants and heels high enough to make any working girl envious. What really IRKED me about her performance was the fact that she wouldn't shut up. AND the fact that she talked loud enough for the entire cabin to hear. Also your crew in the economy cabin were busy in the aisle. SO when the curtain was left opened "for security reasons, SIR!" passengers naturally had to use the forward lavatory since the cart was not getting out of the aisle anytime soon. And the jumpseater of course managed to THROW herself across the aisle (in the process spilling my drink!) while practically shrieking at he or she who dared brave the line into the "first class cabin" that "THIS IS FIRST CLASS !!! GO BACK!!! SIT DOWN!!! YOU CANT COME UP HERE!!!!" Don't give me the crap about a jumpseater being a crew member on duty at all times. She wasn't in Uniform but boy did she flash that ID all the while whining about how United is treating her. Do her a favor. Get RID OF HER! A loose cannon like that is all you need right now!

OK. SO. Now we get to Chicago. Arrive C4. I proceed down to the Red Carpet Club at C 18...Its a dump. As in FILTHY. Dishes and cups on EVERY TABLE....5 empty trays that I assume at one time held crackers and various munchies. I enquire of the bartender on duty as to the availability of other snacks. "DERSA RETORANT OW-SIDE" (I ascertained this to mean, "There is a restaurant outside") well you can't bring food into the club and no big deal, my flight to DCA is a DINNER FLIGHT. I order my drink and upon entering the smoking area am verbally castigated by a man who says rather impudently I might add, that "youshouldaordereddatfromadawaitress" who was sitting on the phone in the smoking area. I didnt even know she was an employee until she saw that I had need of a refill. I called Executive Reservations and got Ms. Pat McGreagor in Denver. (the only good part of this trip on United) I informed her of the deplorable conditions in the club. She put me on hold and made some phone calls. She came back, again apologized and referred me to a Service Director, Ms. Jackson. Thank you Ms. Mac Gregor, but next time I think I will pass. This woman barely looked up at me and more or less snapped "do you wanna file a complaint or what?" NO, I just wanted to point out the serious discrepancy by reading that United has the best airport clubs in the world. Given that I am a member of several and have never seen a dump like this. Pointing out that the "waitress" was on the phone she responded "they are allowed to do that on break" HMMMMMMMMMMMM. Last I checked I have to pay 475.00 per year to be a member of the club. And I don't recall any of my friends at United who are employees being allowed to duck into the Red Carpet Club when on break. Frankly I am amazed. But nothing United does these days surprises me. Time to head to gate B11 for the flight to DCA. As usual its a circle jerk during boarding. Must be minimum staffing since there are 3 cabin attendants. The "purser" was too slammed to even acknowledge that we were boarding much less off coffee or even water. (your other crews manage) So

off we go. Up in the air rather quickly. Im looking forward to dinner, since I have pre-ordered a lo-fat option.

I am sitting in 1B... your purser manages to take meal orders from everyone in the cabin in an order I have come to term "selective discrimination" (yes I know she was taking orders in the order of Premier Status) Sorry, but I hate to tell you that Star Alliance Gold gets me NOTHING on United. Including Upgrades. I ***** P A I D ***** 966.00 for a one way ticket from Atlanta to Washington. FULL FARE. She comes to me and says, "will you be having barbecued ribs for dinner" I said, no I will be having my lo fat meal. "hmmm....well I dont see your name on the list ...you have to order this in advance you know (duh! I think I have flown a few million miles and know this being that I booked it 2 weeks ago) ... you know your travel agent probably forgot to do it.

LESSON ONE: I DIDNT USE A TRAVEL AGENT. I WENT DIRECTLY TO UAL DCACTO.

LESSON TWO: PASS THE BUCK. UNITED IS GOOD AT THAT

LESSON THREE: I HAD ORDERED IT

Funny. But the man across the aisle was eating a salmon filet. The meal choices were ravioli or beef. There was a card on his meal tray that said " MR. J. DOUGLAS/THIS MEAL HAS BEEN ESPECIALLY PREPARED FOR YOU" So IXNAY to the fact that I wasn't on the list.. He was very into the meal and commented as we were chatting across the aisle. He and his wife had managed to upgrade from "W" fares AND he got MY meal. Of course it wasn't his fault. I find it appalling that someone who actually PAID for first class (something you people might want to recognize come Chapter 11 time) doesn't get the service. So needless to say I passed on the meal. And my "travel agent that screwed it up" just happened to be United Air Lines. You see, I don't use a travel agent any more because since the airlines dumped commissions, they want to charge me an extra 50.00 to screw it up and its obvious that as usual , I can get the same fouled up service by just calling United directly!

An airplane is a means of transportation . NOT a restaurant. But when I PAY for first class I certainly am entitled to EXPECT to recieve what I PAID for!

And in my business, (the legal profession) we call that BREACH OF CONTRACT

When will you people shape up and realize that if you keep screwing the customer, that you aren't going to have to worry about flying since you will be out of business?

Mr. Tilton, you may expect FEDEX AIRBILL: 8372 0652 9359 to arrive at WHQ tomorrow. In it you will find the nuts and pretzels and cocktail straws and napkins that were removed (by ME) from my seat on UA 628 PRIOR TO BEING ABLE TO OCCUPY SAID SEAT on 12/1/2002.

Best of luck in the future. With employees and service like this you haven't got a chance!

September 26, 2002

The U.S. Air Force OSI/FBI confiscated several boxes of evidence, related to United maintenance records at Charleston. The same evening, UAL told a mechanic that he will face a hearing early next week to face discharge for his involvement in this action. A source has informed Untied.com that one engine just serviced by UAL failed 5 out of 8 test runs and that a supervisor signed off on the work and destroyed all documentation related to the failures. Arrests may be close

at hand.

August 24, 2002

Three of the four wives of the pilots and co-pilots of the two UA flights that went down on Sept. 11 appeared on the show this morning. All four families experienced the following in their post 9/11 dealings with United:

1. UA docked the pilot's and co-pilot's pay for that month for FAILING TO COMPLETE THE FLIGHTS! (This was NOT a computer glitch - the abbreviated final pay checks were hand written. UA corrected the situation only after threatened action by the Pilot's Union.)
2. Parents of the pilots (who have standby flight privileges with UA) were sent certified letters instructing them to destroy any unused tickets for future travel as they would not be honored.
3. Each family was initially given a lump sum payment, free and clear of any restrictions or conditions of any kind, to cover funeral and memorial expenses. Later they received certified letters rescinding the 'no conditions' part, saying that the \$25k would be counted against any future settlement.
4. All four families have now been given free tickets to travel to upcoming memorial services. One wife requested that they be allowed to use the tickets to travel to visit family on August 29th instead (the birthday of her late husband). UA refused, stating that that date fell outside of the 'window of validity' for the tickets.

The four wives had a face to face meeting with the CEO of UA (Creighton?) to resolve these issues. They were refused on all counts, Creighton saying that there were 'tax issues' involved.

For God's sake, the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT could do a better job of running an airline!

August 13, 2002

Once in a while, Untied.com receives a flame that is so entertaining, it demands to be shared with other readers. Here's a recent sample.

From: CODBUD@aol.com

Date: Tue Aug 13, 2002 12:24:38 AM America/Montreal

I have a complaint to file with all of the idiots that think that running a multi-BILLIONARE dollar corporation, such as United Airlines, is an easy task. My father is a Captain for United Airlines and I am appalled at the mere sight of your tasteless and trashy web-site called UNTIED.com. I think that you have real problems if you have nothing else better to do than criticize a company that has works its ass off to get where it is at today. My father has been through some hard times with United and respectfully so, but does that mean that the company that employs you has never had problems???? I think that a company can never be perfect and for you to demand perfection from a company such as United or any airlines is ridiculous and complete and total cowardly act. I must also let you idiots know that United Express is not the same company as UNITED, they are two completely different companies, so when you try to put United down for something that they didn't do, that would tell me that you are not very intelligent!!!! I am sure that if you worked for a great company such as United you would understand that hard work and EDUCATION can pay off. I bid you farewell.

United Airlines FOREVER

July 2, 2002

Since the writer of the following letter has been advised by his attorney to retain anonymity for now, we are asking that any employees, past or present, with knowledge of similar incidents, contact us through the ualemployee address. All such correspondence will be conveyed to the former supervisor and, with your permission, may be featured on the Untied.com site as well.

I am a (former) Supervisor who received a complaint from an employee who was allegedly sexually harassed by another Supervisor. I reported it immediately to my manager, who said he'd take care of it.

Approximately ONE YEAR LATER, because of other abuses to this same employee (retaliation, denial of legitimate FMLA request, etc.) and by this time Union intervention (no Union representation earlier) the Co. launched an investigation, which they quickly attempted to whitewash, and denying to EEOC that they knew anything about it prior to then. However in interviewing me for this investigation, the Manager attempted to put words in my mouth during the investigation interview which would clear him of liability, but I refused and eventually I was terminated, after I made sure I had documentation and proof (in black and white) that Local Station Mgmt., People Svc, Legal dept, and others knew about this and did nothing.

There is a Zero Tolerance regulation within UA, but in fact it is Selective Tolerance. I would appreciate very much if anyone else that might know of other situations like this, or that might be convinced to speak up (now that they know they're not alone) would contact me ASAP, as my case against UA is presently filed in Federal Court, but no date set as of yet.

Believe me, this is no bogus communication, this is the real thing. If anyone does NOT know what this company is capable of by now, I will make sure that they will.

June 17, 2002

This letter is being featured here as it so eloquently expresses the sense of frustration and disappointment that passengers feel when first confronted by the indefensible stupidity of UAL's operations and are then further insulted by the airline's cynical demonstration of "regret."

To: Mr. Jack Creighton, CEO
CC: Aviation Consumer Protection Division

Dear Mr. Creighton:

There is a reason people are flying less nowadays. It has little to do with fear generated by the Sept. 11 attacks. It has everything to do with the fact companies like yours treat passengers like garbage.

Nothing ever changes.

Two summers ago, your industry went before Congress and promised to clean up its act after its deplorable performance through the peak travel season. Instead, all passengers face is longer lines, inexplicable delays and a further descent in service.

After that infamous summer, your company printed apologies for its blunders at the bottom of every itinerary. Typed, computer-generated words enhanced the warmth

of the oh-so-sincere message. Truly, they did.

Clearly, those words were nothing but lip service.

I am writing you today regarding my latest woeful experience on your airline, as well as the general malaise your company's incompetence has created in the flying public.

There are so many problems with your airline, and flying in general, I do not know where to begin. Let us start with my flight, United 428, from Denver to Newark, N.J., on April 19.

Upon arriving at the airport, I find the new security company, hired by United to replace Argenbright, has implemented strict new measures requiring every passenger to be finished with the check-in process one hour prior to departure.

There is nothing inherently wrong with this new procedure, except for the fact your staff is ill-equipped to handle it. And no passengers were ever notified regarding the change.

As is now standard, I arrived at the airport two hours prior to departure. But because you had so few personnel working in the front, I did not make it through this maze of a line until 50 minutes had passed. I was lucky.

An estimated 40 percent of the people in line did not enjoy such success and missed your new one-hour deadline. This resulted in general chaos and well-deserved anger, as passengers were re-booked on later flights to meet this new and previously unannounced change in procedure.

Tell you what. Lets skip that problem for a few moments. Lets pretend your ridiculously strict enforcement of a previously unannounced rule change never happened. Lets skip directly to the problems on board flight 428.

With the flight nearly completed, a freak thunderstorm hit the greater New York area and produced tornado-sized winds. Our flight was diverted to Washington Dulles. As aggravating as weather problems can be, I know they cannot be avoided.

What occurred on the ground at Dulles, however, was a disgrace.

After refueling the Boeing 777 at Dulles shortly after 5 p.m., ground control informed our pilot Newark would reopen at 6 p.m, and that we should be airborne no later than 5:45 p.m. and into Newark by 6:30 p.m.

Instead of making the best out of this situation, the heavy-handed bureaucrats who run United Operations at Dulles decided to combine two smaller Newark-bound flights onto our plane.

First, we were told it would be one flight. So we watched all the passengers from this first flight climb aboard and find seats. After waiting nearly an hour, we seemed ready to leave.

But then United Operations told us they decided that passengers from yet another commuter flight would be transferred onto our plane. We had to endure the entire process again.

As one of your own flight attendants said shortly after the second announcement,

"This isn't a flight. This is a disgrace."

At 8 p.m., approximately two-and-a-half hours after we could have left, we finally left for Newark. Aside from the fact we were denied food during the ordeal, we wasted countless hours on top of the initial weather delay.

Your operations department capitalized on our helplessness.

Your Newark Operations crew fared no better. Although we were only the third United flight to arrive after the fierce storm, according to a baggage handler, it took your ground crew 50 minutes to get our luggage onto the carousel.

Four hours after we were originally scheduled to land, already-flustered passengers had the added pleasure of waiting nearly an hour for their bags.

And while we're on the subject of Newark baggage claim, I've stood in grimy New York City alleys less seedy than your baggage area. It is a cesspool.

But that is no surprise. From the beginning, starting with the awful security company you hired in Denver, to the end, every aspect of the trip brought nonstop aggravation. All of these problems fostered nothing but animosity toward your airline.

Of course, that animosity has existed since your wretched summer of 2001. But your poorly planned, knee-jerk responses to the Sept. 11 hijackings have only exacerbated these feelings.

Newly implemented measures are nothing more than a big dog-and-pony show, none of which would have stopped the tragedy. For all your PR-spin, you still do not X-ray every checked bag. You still do not bag-match, despite assurances to the contrary. You hassle your paying customers while allowing the real dangers to persist.

And all passengers get for your toothless measures are longer - and unpredictable - lines. An hour at check-in. Two hours in the security line. Another hour at the gate.

By the time I navigate the maze of your disgraceful check-in procedures and arrive at the gate, then fly to my destination, I may as well have driven. I can drive from Denver to Chicago, and arrive only two hours later than if I had flown United.

As more people realize this, many will choose that option, which will only have a worsening effect on your already-poor fiscal health.

Of course, these new procedures only magnified your pre-existing ineptitude. United already flirted with bankruptcy before that day, thanks to years of fiscal imprudence and the crescendo of anger during the summer of 2000.

While I have great sympathy and compassion for United employees who were affected by Sept. 11, I resent the fact United corporate shills milked the sympathy card before Congress and received a \$15 billion bailout.

As a taxpayer, I am happy to support a troubled industry after the cowardly attack on our country. As a taxpayer, I am outraged you would request these funds under the guise of Sept. 11 relief, when in fact you are looking to recover from years of fiscal avarice and galling treatment of passengers.

Airlines go bankrupt for a reason, sir. One of which is because they can no longer meet the reasonable expectations of your customers. Why should taxpayers support your anemic airline when well-run companies, such as Southwest, turned a profit through bear-market times?

I have written my elected representatives, urging them not to grant you further financial relief and to let the free market work its course. I have also implored them to revisit the issue of passing a true passenger's bill of rights, which your lobbyists skillfully scuttled two summers ago.

Now, more than ever, passengers deserve that legislation. Two years later, you still treat customers as if you believe we are too inattentive to notice your incompetence or too apathetic to care. I can assure you the latter is not true. We have endured United's shameful conduct for far too long.

Thankfully, Jet Blue and Frontier are finally emerging as legitimate challenges to your monopoly of the Denver market. I am rooting for them to succeed, and will continue to fly them as much as possible.

You are not losing customers such as myself because people are afraid to fly. You are losing customers because you make it inherently inconvenient and aggravating to do so.

I long for the days when the worst complaints about airline service were regarding the food. Now, I hope for the day when United will follow Braniff and Eastern into the bankruptcy courts.

It is not out of any malice these wishes are born. Only when United is gone, however, will we receive efficient and responsible service from a major carrier in Denver. Until then, we can only vent our frustrations regarding your inane procedures, needless flight delays and empty promises.

Please save your canned apology letter for the endless list of affronts.

I've had enough of your company's hollow regrets. If you are not prepared to offer compensatory measures, such as additional Mileage Plus miles or class upgrades on future flights -- measures to show you are genuinely sorry -- than I have neither the time nor the inclination to deal with United.

Mr. Creighton, I understand you assumed the title of CEO only in recent months. I wish you well in your efforts to reverse the sagging performance of your company.

But after more than 50 trips in the last three years on your airline, there is only one lesson that reverberates through my mind.

At United, nothing ever changes.

Sincerely,

Peter C. Bigelow

April 18, 2002

UAL vs. Kevakian -- round 2

It seems that this story of UAL retaliation against its employees for whistleblowing is becoming all too familiar. Fortunately, the governmental bodies are starting to take notice and we can hope that changes will soon be imposed. In the meantime, UAL will only respond to the bottom line... money.

Mr. Kevakian's original letter, detailing the abuse to which his former employer (United) put him, can be found [here](#).

First off, I want to thank you for the opportunity to present my allegations directed towards United Airlines on your website. I have received hundreds of email from concerned United Airlines employees who describe continued safety and maintenance infractions perpetrated by United Airlines management. Most of the email that I have received deals with maintenance and crew duty time violations originating out of San Francisco International Airport.

The maintenance issues primarily deal with what is called SQUAWK Sheets. These sheets inform the pilot of any maintenance issues he or she should be aware of concerning that particular aircraft. If the Squawk Sheet is altered or completely removed, the pilot is flying blind concerning any potential maintenance issues that could possibly arise during flight. I have received numerous emails describing how United management at SFO either destroy the Squawk Sheet or alter them in some way thus, taking the pilot decision-making out of the loop so the flight takes off on time. While working at SFO, I was not personally aware of this situation, but if the allegations are in fact true, the ramifications could be disastrous.

The other bulk of email deals with flight crew duty time infractions. The complaints are primarily from flight crewmembers that fly from HNL (Hawaii) to SFO (San Francisco) to CHI (Chicago). The email I received describes concerns on flights into San Francisco during Flow. Flow is a situation where San Francisco International Airport reduces approaches and departures to one runway for safety reasons. The repercussions of this are that all flights are delayed considerably with some flight crews experiencing holding pattern delays. Once the flight crew lands at SFO, they are expected to continue on to Chicago regardless of their duty time or how tired they may be. Now the bulk of these complaints comes from the flight attendants, I did however receive one email from a pilot who indicated that there is an "expectation" from the airline to proceed to your final destination regardless of duty time. His concern is that one-day a flight crew may make a tragic mistake caused by fatigue. While working at SFO, I was aware of the flight crew duty time violations.

Every time, I forwarded email to the FAA or the DOT concerning these matters, I kept asking myself why would a person in management risk the lives of not only the flight crewmembers, but passengers as well? I found out later that one word answered my question. That word is MONEY. United management personnel and some of their subordinates receive on-time performance bonuses. These bonuses can be quite substantial over the course of a year.

For about a year now, I have been forwarding select emails that I receive to authorities within the Federal Aviation Administration and the United States Department of Transportation. When I hired on with United Airlines, one of my references was a FAA Inspector. I asked him how would I forward information that I receive from other United employees. He told me what to do but warned me to stay out of it because if United Airlines ever found out I would probably lose my job.

Well, it appears that United Airlines found out about my whistle blowing as late as February 12th, 2002. On February 15th, while being admitted to John C. Lincoln Hospital for a possible heart attack my wife was informed that we no longer had

United Airlines health benefits. The next day, from my hospital bed, I contacted United Airlines Benefits - Blue Cross Blue Shield and was told that they received a Memo on February 12th, 2002 from United Airlines to terminate my insurance coverage and to back date my policy to last year October 1, 2001. I was warned that even though Blue Cross Blue Shield may have already paid some claims during this time, I may now be responsible for all medical bills incurred by myself and eligible family members because of charge backs. I also lost my Cobra rights because they are using the October 1, 2001 date.

After leaving the hospital, I contacted my previous supervisor whom advised me that I was "separated" from the firm effective October 1, 2001. I informed her that I was never notified. To clear up the matter, United Management sent me a certified letter received on April 3rd, 2002 indicated that my termination date was move up to April 1, 2002. They cited a past medical report that indicated I was disabled and that I could not return to work. The medical report they referred to was made 6 months prior to my surgery date of January 10, 2001 which stated that in the United doctors opinion, I would be able to perform all the duties of employment sometime after surgery. Six months after surgery, the United Airlines medical examiner said he would need an additional six months to determine my work status. United Airlines never made the follow-up appointment but, instead, relied on the remarks of my surgeon that I may never be able to lift anything above 50 lbs. I even completed a Functional Capacity Exam, which did indicate that I was weak on my right side, but with physical therapy, I could build myself up and thus, cleared for light duty. Also, I just received a letter from Cigna Insurance, United Airlines long-term disability carrier. The letter indicated they reviewed the same documents that United Airlines claim to have reviewed and determined that I now meet the physical limitations of Gate Agent (among other categories), the same category of work that I was terminated from, and thus, no longer qualify for disability benefits. This letter was dated 7 days after my April 1, 2002 termination notice received from United Airlines.

Not once, and in contravention of current Union agreement contracts, was I ever offered light duty status. However, during this same time and at the same station I was assigned to work (Sky Harbor Airport Phoenix) there were two women whom became pregnant and was automatically offered light duty status for a period not to exceed 90 days.

The genesis of all this surrounds my Workers Compensation Appeals Board victory against United Airlines as I referred to in my original email to you. From that moment on, United management embarked on a path of retaliation against me in retribution for exerting my legal rights.

Case in point. During the discovery process legal counsel on both sides have the right of discovery, which is an exchange of documents prior to a hearing. At my Workers Compensation Appeals Board hearing, the Honorable Judge Quan asked United Airlines legal counsel Jack Huskin with the law firm of Mullen & Filippi, why he refused to provide discovery. Jack Huskin replied, "Because I did not want to take the time to make the photo copies". That is the type of arrogance, which has permeated United Airlines. In my opinion it was that type of arrogance, which caused them, in part, to lose in court and will continue to do so in the near future.

Case in point. After my victory within the Workers Compensation Appeals Board, I had to fly down to Los Angeles to see a physical therapist. Upon my arrival to the airport, I was told that I could no longer fly using my flight benefits. I demanded to speak with a Supervisor to find out the reason why. He approached my wife and I and said he could not give me a reason. I noticed his hands were shaking. I explained that I had to go to LA for medical reasons. He said there is nothing he could do. I then asked him to provide me with a letter of employment verification so that I can fly on SouthWest (a normal request with employees). He refused.

HOWEVER, my wife was allowed to fly that day aboard United Airlines. The irony is that I had to sign her "Write-Your-Own" ticket for her to board. I was forced to pay full fare to fly SouthWest Airlines where I met up with my wife.

Upon our arrival back home, I immediately contacted the Union. The Union filed a grievance and all of a sudden I am accused of not paying for past travel benefits. Now the rest of my family is unable to fly. I asked for copies of my payroll records, United Airlines refuses and then says they are lost. Does this sound familiar to any other United employee out there?

I was finally able to show United management that I did in fact pay all of my flight pass travel and that it was United Airlines who owed me money. Management never followed up with me nor did the Union.

Now I am terminated from United Airlines without benefit of any administrative appellate rights, my family has no health insurance coverage causing my workers compensation attorney is to file what is called a 132A Discrimination for Wrongful Termination while under Workers Compensation.

I am sure that my termination from United Airlines involves more than just my Workers Compensation Appeals Board victory. I speculate that my assisting whistle blowers have a lot to do with it as well.

Consistently, United Airlines management claims that United Employee whistle blowers are just disgruntled individuals. That is not what I get when I read all these emails. What I get is that most of these individuals are frightened. Frightened for themselves and their families and frightened for the passengers who fly aboard United Airlines aircraft. These are the people who see first hand the maintenance and safety infractions perpetrated by United management solely to benefit from on-time performance bonuses. Some of these concerned individuals claim that United Airlines is a ticking time bomb and if no one will take a serious look at all the allegations presented -- people may end up paying with there lives.

For me, I will continue to forward the email I receive to the appropriate government authorities and pursue my allegations within United States Federal Court and Department of Labor. It is my understanding that a class-action law suit will be filed against United Airlines within the near future. It is my hope that one-day all the sacrifices made by the individuals who decided to speak out for the concerns of others will eventually be acknowledged.

My advice for those who currently hold United Airlines stock... SELL.

Sincerely,

Gregory S. Kevakian

March 22, 2002

UAL vs. Whistleblowers

This letter and the accompanying order from the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration office, describe UAL's apparent retaliation against one of its employees for reporting safety concerns to his employer. UAL argued that the employee was terminated for violations of IAMA Rules of Conduct, rather than for protected activities (whistleblowing), and is appealing the decision, but has refused to provide reasonable information that would have allowed for their true motivation to be determined through

investigation.

Further information regarding UAL's treatment of its employees can be found [here](#). Additional reports can be read [here](#) concerning inattention and disregard for safety, including one from a [whistleblower](#), who was reprimanded after reporting a crack in an aircraft frame and another regarding [poor training for security staff](#).

I was a mechanic for United Airlines for almost 16 years. On July 6, 2000 I was involved in a safety incident on an A320 at departure time, in which my foreman created the safety hazard by informing the flight crew that we were finished with our job, when in fact we were not. The flight crew then turned the system on while we were still working. I pursued this incident for 9 months until it ultimately cost me my job. I filed suit under the whistleblower act and have won the preliminary order of immediate reinstatement. However United is appealing the decision. Under the whistleblower act, there cannot be a stay in the reinstatement of an employee who has won this preliminary order. United has filed a motion in court that their due process was violated during the investigation. Here is the preliminary order (public record):

December 7, 2001

Mr. John Midgett
Counsel
United Airlines
World Headquarters
1200 East Algonquin Road
Elk Grove Township, Illinois 60007

RE: United Airlines/Lawson & Lawson/8-0600-01-013

Dear Mr. Midgett:

This is to advise you that we have completed our investigation of the above-referenced complaint filed by David Lawson and Jodi Lawson, under the employee protection provisions of 49 U.S.C. Sec. 42121 of the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR Act). Complainant David Lawson, claimed that Respondent, United Airlines, suspended him with out pay and terminated him from employment in retaliation for [scanning error here]

Jurisdiction

Complainant David Lawson and Respondent are both covered under the provisions of the AIR Act. Respondent is an air carrier and flies a commercial aircraft within the United States. The Complainant was employed as a mechanic by Respondent, United Airlines. Complainant Jodi Lawson is not an employee of an air carrier or contractor or subcontractor of an air carrier. Complainant Jodi Lawson is the wife of the complainant and is not covered under the provisions of the AIR Act.

Whether the complaint was timely filed.

Complainant was discharged on or about April 2, 2001, which he claims is the most recent date of discrimination. On June 21, 2001, he filed a complaint with the Secretary of Labor-OSHA, alleging that Respondent discriminated against him in violation of 49 U.S.C. 42121. This complaint was timely filed.

Findings (Analysis to include protected activity, employer knowledge, adverse action and nexus)

The Act prohibits discharging or otherwise discriminating against an employee if the employee "provided... to the employer... information relating to any violation or alleged violation of any order, regulation, or standard of the Federal Aviation Administration or any other provision of Federal Law relating to air carrier safety under this subtitle or any other law of the United States..." 49 U.S.C. Sec. 42121(a)(1).

David Lawson participated in a protected activity under the AIR Act when he voiced numerous complaints to management beginning on July 6, 2000, related to an incident involving the repair of an air conditioning pack. United Airlines management has admitted knowledge of this complaint. As a result of Mr. Lawson's protected activity, he was subjected to an adverse employment action. The proximate timing of the adverse action to the protected activity, and the disparate treatment of the complainant establishes a causal link between the protected activity and the adverse action. Therefore, a prima facie case of retaliatory discharge is established.

The respondent asserts "No Inference of Discrimination Can Be Drawn Based On The Timing Of Lawson's Termination." The respondent relies upon the argument that Lawson voiced his initial complaint on Jul 11, 2000, and the date of Lawson's termination of April 2, 2001 (a nine month lapse of time). The respondent provided several court holdings to support the argument.

The respondent's position in this matter is rejected based upon the fact that Mr. Lawson participated in protected activity beginning on July 6, 2000, but this was not his only protected activity. He also participated in protected activity on July 11, 2000, August 30 2001 numerous times in September 2000, October 24, 2000, in December 2000, January 2, 2001 and February 2001. The complainant was subjected to an adverse action on April 2, 2001. The complainants final protected activity was within two months of his discharge. Thus, temporal proximity has been established in accordance with court holdings in this matter. A prime facie case of retaliatory discharge is established.

Consequently, once a prima facie case is established, the burden of production shifts to the Respondent to present evidence sufficient to rebut the inference of discrimination. The Respondent maintains they terminated the complainant for various violations of the IAMA Rules of Conduct. The evidence in this case suggests that the respondent was motivated by both prohibited and legitimate reasons. Consequently, the respondent must show that Lawson would have been terminated even if he had not engaged in projected activity.

There is evidence that other employees similarly situated had participated in similar conduct to the complainants but those employees had not been discharged. The respondent requested specific information about these situations to rebut these claims. The respondent had previously stated in Lawsons union grievance hearing that if any employee made these claims, they would be investigated and disciplined for their actions. This position creates a dilemma in protecting confidential sources from discriminatory acts by the respondent when providing information during an investigation.

The respondent was asked to provide disciplinary actions of other employees similarly situated in order to ascertain whether Lawson would have been terminated even if he had not engaged in protected activity. The respondent replied that they have historically released confidential employee information in the union context when requested by subpoena or during the course of litigation. Thus, they would only be willing to provide information regarding specific incidents, if

identified.

An impasse has been created by the respondents unwillingness to provide reasonable information in the investigation process, the lack of subpoena authority in the investigative process, the "chilling effect" created by the respondent involving employees providing information about similarly situated employees, and the balancing of release of any information provided by this agency from a confidential source which may lead to discipline.

Therefore, a decision in this case can only be made with the weight of the evidence to date which is that the complainant was discharged in violation of the AIR Act. The respondent has not shown that Lawson would have been fired in the absence of his protected activity.

The following is a Preliminary Order which provides relief in accordance with 49 U.S.C. 42121(2)(A).

Preliminary Order

1. The Respondent will reinstate Complainant David Lawson to the same or an essentially equivalent position to the one this employee occupied prior to discharge, with full restoration of all seniority and other rights, benefits and privileges.
2. The Respondent will purge the personnel record of David Lawson of any derogatory references to his termination of April 2, 2001, or the exercise of his rights, under Section 519 of the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century, 49 U.S.C. 40101, Section 42121.
3. The Respondent will make whole Complainant David Lawson by payment to him of all wages lost as the result of his discharge.
4. The Respondent will pay all costs associated with David Lawson's endeavor in seeking employment.
5. The Respondent will pay Complainant David Lawson's reasonable attorney fees.
6. The Respondent will pay Complainant \$5,000.00 in compensatory damages.
7. The Respondent understands and agrees not to discharge or in any manner discriminate against any employee because such employee has filed any complaint or instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to Section 519 of the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century, 49 U.S.C. 40101 Section 42121, or has testified or is about to testify in any such proceeding or because of the exercise by such employee on behalf of himself or others of any right afforded by this Act(s).

Appeal Notification

The respondent is being notified under separate cover of the determination reached in this matter. You and the respondent have important rights of objection under the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment Reform Act of the 21st Century which must be exercised in a timely fashion. Section 42121(b)(2)(A) permits either the person alleged to have committed the violation or the complainant to file objections to the Secretary's Findings and/or Order and request a hearing on record: 49 U.S.C. 42121(b)(2)(A). If no objections are filed within 30 days, this finding and order will become final and not subject to judicial review 49 U.S.C. 42121(b)(2)(A).

If you have any objections, you must file them and request a hearing within 30 days of receipt of this letter by facsimile, overnight/next day delivery mail or telegram to:

Chief Administrative Law Judge
U. S. Department of Labor Suite
400 Techworld Building
800 K Street
Washington, D.C. 20001-8002
Telephone: 202/693-7542
Facsimile: 202/693-7385

with a copy to:

Adam Finkel, Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor-OSHA
1999 Broadway Suite 1690
P.O. Box 48556
Denver, Colorado 80201-6550

Additionally, you must notify the respondent of your objections to the Findings and/or Order and your request for a hearing. Upon receipt of an objection and a request for a hearing, the Chief Administrative Law Judge will assign the case to a judge who will notify the parties of the day, time, and place of hearing. The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Practice and Procedure for Administrative Hearings Before the Office of Administrative Law Judges, codified at 29 C.F.R. Part 18.

It should be made clear to all parties that the U. S, Department of Labor does not represent any of the parties in a hearing. The hearing is an adversarial proceeding in which the parties will be allowed an opportunity to present their evidence for the record. The Administrative Law Judge who conducts the hearing will issue a recommended decision to the Secretary based on the evidence, testimony, and arguments presented at the hearing.

Sincerely,

Adam M. Finkel, ScD., CIH
Regional Administrator
Region VIII

Cc: Steven Silvern, Complainant's Counsel
Chief Administrative Law Judge
Federal Aviation Administration
USDOL/SOL

March 16, 2002

How UAL Treats its Own - #1

This letter continues the series of recent features that document how UAL treats its own employees. Note that the writer has requested anonymity for now (and as such, all identifying names have been removed) but is seeking the services of an attorney. If you're an attorney interested in taking up the case, either to demand reinstatement or to seek a larger cash settlement for lost back pay, you can reach the former employee by email.

- 1991 Following the demise of Eastern Airlines, where I had worked for 19 years, I was hired by United Airlines in San Francisco as an RSM (Ramp Serviceman).

- 3/14/94 Sustained ramp injury. Filed injury report.
- 3/16/94 Fell in UAL parking lot. Filed injury report.
- 1/3/95 Cervical fusion operation done by Dr. [B] at the Bay Area Hospital, Coos Bay, Or.
- 2/2/96 Received letter from UAL advising me that my personal physician needed to provide a clinical narrative report. The letter continued with:

Unless you are able to return to work or an extension is granted you will be separated from UAL effective 5/16/96.

- 4/15/96 Attempted to obtain clinical narrative report (Closing Evaluation) from the treating physician, Dr. [B]. However, the doctor had been seriously injured in a horseback riding accident, delaying this report for several weeks. I was finally seen by another doctor, Dr. [W], whose report mentioned "she can lift up to 50 lb. without difficulty" and indicated that I could return to regular work with no restrictions.
- Received UAL termination letter, dated 5/14/96.
- 5/14/96 Drove to San Francisco, bringing with me Dr. [W]'s report, and ready to re-check UAL Medical in order to return to work.
- 5/15/96 Went to UAL Medical for checkup. The medical evaluation from L. Purdy highlighted "She can lift to 50 lb. without difficulty" from Dr. [W]'s report and then checked off a 50 lb weight lifting restriction! I explained that her interpretation (that 50 lb. was the maximum I could lift) of that ambiguous sentence from Dr. [W]'s report was incorrect and that I would ask my personal physician for a clarification by fax.
- 5/15/96 Dr. [B] faxed UAL Medical a clarification that I was able to lift 75 lbs.
- 5/15/96 Filed First Step Complaint Form with IAM/Carl Finamore. Remedy Sought: "Request extension of EIS for 1 month and then be made whole based on medical clearance." This grievance was filed based on my belief (and my physician's) that I could perform the physical duties of my job. The Union did not address UAL's termination letter (a copy of which was handed to me that day.)
- 5/31/96 both Dr. [B] and Dr. [W] faxed UAL, noting that "I see no reason she cannot return to her job" and indicated, "she can lift 75 pounds."
- 7/9/97 Settlement hearing for my Workman's Compensation claim, filed two years earlier by Attorney [G]'s office. Judge Alvin Barrett declared me a 20.2% permanent disability rating and awarded \$10,220.
- 11/10/99 Received letter from Qual Med stating that I had no medical coverage with UAL as of 5/31/99. Interestingly, I continued to receive dental coverage until the last check from MetLife was paid on 12/21/00
- 1/27/00 My 132A (wrongful termination suit?), filed by my attorney, was dismissed due to the fact that I was still technically employed and receiving

the benefits from UAL, including airline passes, medical and dental coverage.

- 2/21/00 Paid out-of-pocket for FCE (Functional Capacity Eval) and passed with flying colors. I was told that UAL would have to take me back if I passed this test. United never addressed the FCE.
- 10/2/00 Received letter from UAL, denying my request for medical arbitration
- 1/11/01 [NK] (IAM) comes to Coos Bay to photocopy all my medical info as "there was really nothing in my file." Since I was under the impression that the IAM was wroking to get my job back, I cooperated and gave her access to all my records.
- 3/1/02 [NK] faxes me an agreement reached between representatives of UAL and the IAM in full and final settlement. Of course, I don't plan to sign this agreement.
- 3/4/02 [RD] (IAM/Chicago) called me regarding the agreement. Although it took the IAM almost 6 years to reach this stage, Mr. Delaney said that I "needed to get back to [him] about this agreement in a reasonable length of time, say, a couple of days."

A quick wrap-up of the current situation:

- I was never offered Reasonable Accommodation.
- I never received COBRA notification.
- I have no clearly defined termination date.
- I received no vocational rehabilitation. Other than a couple of months on a sales job and a few weeks as a census taker, I have not worked since 3/14/94. I have no skills other than working for an airline, which I have done since 1968.
- I feel that UAL has discriminated against me on the basis of my age and the fact that I was an injured woman. I realize that this is tough to prove.
- I feel that the IAM has breached its duty to handle my grievance in a timely manner and keep me properly informed of the status of my grievance. Furthermore, the Union's delayed handling of my grievance may have jeopardized my rights regarding a civil suit due to possible expiration of the statute of limitations on some actions.
- I wonder if UAL's keeping me on medical and dental coverage prohibited me from being able to pursue a 132A.
- Why is UAL dealing with me at all since I've had it in writing on more than one occasion that I'm fired and that my grievance has been denied?

I recently talked to another attorney and his comment was that "It sounds like the IAM is in collusion with the company, and that's very unusual." He was referring to

the fact that the Union was agreeing to include a rather damning medical report of Jan. 1997 -- almost 9 months after my termination.

My hope is that now that I've been offered a possible settlement, an attorney can finally get involved and take up my case. [G] only deals with workman's compensation cases so I need other representation. Is anyone interested?

March 11, 2002

How UAL Treats its Own - #2

My story starts back in 1993 when I was injured by an employee falling on my shoulder. I was taken to the hospital, X-rayed, and told that I had broken my back. The insurance company at that time, Alexsis, decided that they would not allow me to stay in the hospital. They took me to the car and told me that I would have to get in the car. After trying three times, I passed out and the emergency room attendant had to pick me up and put me in the car. I was then taken to my house by the manager of our office and put in a hide-a-bed couch since my bedroom was upstairs.

After that, I tried to call the insurance company to see a doctor and was told that I did not need to. After two weeks, I was finally allowed to see a doctor. I was off work for two months and returned to my duties as a customer service supervisor. I went back part-time and quickly worked back to full-time. All this time I was in therapy as I still had physical problems.

I transferred to LAX as a ramp supervisor before deciding that the medication and pain were too much, so I stepped down to a customer service rep position. I continued to work until 1995 when the pain got so bad that the doctor took me off work and said I needed surgery.

United and Alexsis said I did not. So I hired an attorney to fight for me. It took two and a half years of fighting and no pay before my attorney set up a conference with United and Alexsis. After 22 years of service I was told that United want to give me \$30,000 in exchange for my resignation. My attorney laughed at them and told them we would see them in court the next day. The next morning, my attorney called to tell me that UAL had agreed to pay for the surgery and all back pay. Sounds to me that they did not want to go to court with all the things that had gone on.

I had the surgery and six months later, went back to work with no restrictions. I continued until my back got worse and I was sent to a pain management doctor in 1999. This doctor has done wonders for me and he's not done. He requested to perform a surgery that he claims will help my problem, but here we go again: United and the third insurance company, Gallagher Basset, will not take care of their responsibilities. I have gone through two depositions in the last two weeks and still have no response from Gallagher Bassett. We have been asking for this surgery for the last year.

Also I requested my sick records from the date of the injury to the present, I found that UAL put all the sick time that the insurance company bought back into a "nonexistence" account. Any employees who have suffered an injury should note this -- ask payroll for a copy of your sick records. When I requested my records I found out that before the union got involed, UAL was putting all my buyback pay in a "nonexistence" sick account -- with a total of about 700 hours.

I have gone to my manager and he said there is nothing he can do to help me. I was in management, as was my father -- we know how the system works and a

manager **does** does have the power to help.

I have written letters to UAL and I have gotten back the standard reply: "We're doing everything possible to help you." This is clearly untrue. If I was to have the surgery I would be back to work within three weeks.

I have a court date the first week of April but don't expect it to go that far. Mr. Creighton says that we need trust at UAL. Well, if you're going to treat a employee who has given 24 years of his life to the company this way, do you really expect us to trust?!

Robert Benton

January 27, 2002

How UAL Treats its Own - #3

United Airlines basically destroyed the life of this employee and did everthing they could to wash their hands of responsibility. While this writer has indicated that she lacks the financial means to pursue this matter further and has since "gotten on with her life," any attorneys who may be interested in following up on this story as a pro-bono case are encouraged to contact us through the lawsuits address at Untied.com.

I was a loyal UA employee since 1964 with a break in service from 1974-1977 while our children were in high school. I returned in November of 1977, working, receiving promotions and praise, ending up in ORDCG in 1984. In 1986, I was promoted from BSO to Customer Service Agent.

On December 28, 1986, my car was hit by a non-employee at the Guard Shack Stop Sign. The 16 year old lost control and hit my car twice. O'Hare was closed down temporarily while a co-worker and I were removed from my car with the jaws of life. Initial surgery was performed at the Resurrection Hospital in Chicago.

I appeared (although I could not speak for over one week) on Walter Jacobson's "Perspective" show. The commentary asked, "**Was this person's life not worth a \$300 traffic light?**" Just one month earlier, my young lady friend lost her life plowing under a construction truck at the same intersection, but UA refused to do anything about it. After the telecast, a traffic light was placed there immediately.

In April 1987, walking with the aid of two four legged crutches and a sling over my right shoulder, I flew to California to meet with an orthopedic surgeon at El Cajon Hospital in San Diego. I flew back to Chicago after receiving permission from the rehab group to return to work on a limited basis, for which I prepared through five weeks of classroom study at the UAL training center.

In June 1987, as part of my training, **I was put to work on the bag lines, handling heavy luggage.** At the time, I was walking with the help of two "four-legged" crutches. A piece of luggage dropped and hit my worse-damaged leg and my supervisor put me on the next plane to San Diego for more surgery and physical therapy. Almost one year later, with more surgery still scheduled, the diagnosis was uncertain as to whether I could ever walk again or have total use of my facilities. I remained on long term disability. In 1988, my husband was diagnosed with ALS and became terminally ill, passing away in July 1990.

Given my physical condition, I requested retirement based on disability. The Social Security administration approved my request but in 1991, a UA company doctor,

Dr. McGuffin, ordered me to return to ORD (Chicago) by the end of my long term disability, as the company would not permit retirement unless I was there. Dr. McGuffin's statement was simply, **"I will not allow a transfer for 'sun and fun' to San Diego."** With no medical or prescription coverage, and by now, virtually penniless, I had no choice. I borrowed money from an elderly couple who paid my back to Illinois.

UA refused my request for retirement, but after I hired an attorney, they finally agreed to early retirement based on total and permanent disability. A clause within the many pages of legal text ended my medical coverage after one year. I was devastated, but still loyal to my former employer.

When the "Retirees Make a Difference" program started, I was the first in line. I volunteered and worked at the Democratic National Convention, going on, in 1996, to work part-time at minimum wage, on call in various departments until my last stretch in Facilities Maintenance, headed by Ken Weslander.

At this point, my finances had dwindled and my home had physically collapsed. In order to obtain the funds needed for the repairs, I had to show stability on my work record. I explained this to Mr. Weslander, who put me on the switchboard and front desk of the Facilities Maintenance office. Mr. Weslander was aware of my disability status and personal medical issues.

At one point, Mr. Weslander requested a report on two union employees who were "annoying his friend." I believed his story initially, but quickly discovered that the opposite was true. When I told Mr. Weslander that there was nothing to report, **he put me on the switchboard for 9-1/2 hours with no bathroom or lunch breaks.** (He was aware of my personal urination problems for which I took medication.) When I questioned this assignment, I was told by his clerk that I was wanted in the employment office. Within 20 minutes, I was fired and escorted out of the UA premises.

I tried court, but could not afford my own attorney and was not entitled to union representation as I was not in a protected job class. I stood on my own in front of the Northern Illinois magistrate judge, with all the facts and memos clearly reported, thinking that the truth would be enough. UA came at me with their top brass: Mayer, Brown and Platt, who threatened me with a lawsuit if I told anyone what happened. The judge ruled that the "format" was incorrect and I lost my case.

My employment records from 1964-1977 and my companion pass payments were **somehow "lost" by UA**, and the airline refused to ratify my period of employment from 1977-1992, listing me for only 11 years of service. Despite all my years with the company, I was left with a pension of only \$308.64

When I finally had to declare bankruptcy, I was told that **UA would not allow me any credit union assistance** in the future. I did not receive any UA retirement papers or companion passes. I was refused medical support and could not pay for prescription drugs. In short, UA left me stranded.

The bottom line is that I am a 65 year old disabled widow with no medical coverage apart from Medicare. I lost my job, my husband, and my UA friends, who were disallowed from meeting with me. I have not been on UA premises since, as I am afraid I will be thrown out.

This hurts... and it is time for others to know this happened. I have all of the papers, memos, and reports to substantiate my story.

Anne M. Puccini

UA FILE NO. 040475

December 10, 2001

Is this where the federal bail-out went?

A photo submitted by one of our readers leads one to wonder whether UAL has been spending a bit too much money re-painting their planes with an appropriate logo.



While we initially believed that the image was a playful Photoshop job, three UAL employees have assured us that it's the "real deal." One worker comments:

If you don't already know the original logo was taped over with the correct color tape into the UNTIED logo about 2 weeks ago. It was removed last wednesday and the boss wants to know who did this against FAA regulations! Though he is correct, some people have no sense of humor.

Diary of frustrated flight attendants

Whether or not the public display of this information at Untied.com helped embarrass UAL into taking some action is irrelevant -- we're glad that someone finally got the message!

April 30, 2001

Thank you for posting the information I gave you about the rape of a United Airlines flight attendant at The Westin Bonaventure crew layover hotel.

Ironically, just days after you posted the info on your site, United execs seemed to do an about face and were searching for new crew layover hotel options. Previously, they had deemed the crew layover hotel safe, despite a rape of a flight attendant, an assault of a flight attendant just outside of the hotel, and another incident involving a tourist videotaping flight attendants while they worked out at the hotel gym, and made it perfectly clear to our union that they intended to take no

action what-so-ever regarding changing our crew layover hotel in L.A.

After the information was posted, UAL management stated that they were doing everything in their power to move us. What do you think of that???

The good news is that it has been announced that a suspect has been apprehended in Los Angeles. He is neither a UAL employee nor was he ever a Westin Bonaventure hotel guest.

I would like to thank you for your help in getting our layover hotel in L.A. changed. I have no doubt that Untied.com had a big hand in getting United to take action. I had a feeling 'Big Brother' would be watching, and would be quite embarrassed to learn that the public has been informed of how they treat their (valued???) employees.

Thank you, again.

A Grateful United Airlines Flight Attendant

April 15, 2001

In early March, a United Airlines flight attendant was assaulted at one of the crew layover hotels, the Westin Bonaventure in Los Angeles. The Association of Flight Attendants (the union representing UAL flight attendants) demanded that UAL remove flight attendants from the Westin immediately but the airline first wanted to have United Security review the hotel for security measures.

As of mid April, United has deemed the Westin 'safe' for flight attendants, despite the rape, despite the fact that the rapist has not been apprehended, and despite another assault recently occurring outside the same hotel. According to the union website, "Now we have an incident of a tourist, who wasn't even staying at the hotel, videotaping flight attendants in the workout room, and the Westin managers think nothing of it."

From the union website:

AFA has formally filed a grievance over United's refusal to move us out of the disapproved Westin Bonaventure in downtown Los Angeles. AFA MEC Hotel Chair Libby Sherman has sent a strongly worded letter to Ed Tolle on the matter, stating that we should have been moved out of the hotel when this horrendous crime occurred. Since then, there has been yet another physical assault. We've already hit rock bottom; what does it take to get us a safe downtown hotel? If you do have a downtown LAX layover, you do not have to go to the Westin hotel. Extra rooms have been reserved at two airport hotels. Contact your briefing supervisor, the crew desk or OPB, and get a safer place to stay."

Diary of a frustrated passenger **March, 2001**

Some passenger stories are just begging to be shared in agonizing detail with the rest of the traveling public. Here's how United treated one such passenger, Mr. Jeremy Baumann, who was traveling from Los Angeles to New York (La Guardia),

and who was not only rudely insulted and lied to repeatedly, but had his digital camera and medication stolen. Do you think the airline would feel obligated to compensate Mr. Baumann?

February 17, 2001

- Arrived LAX 11:45 am February 17, 2001 for UA 194 departing 12:49 to Dulles with a connection to LGA; proceeded to counter as there was no line-up.
- "Get behind the line, I didn't call you. I'm workin' here."
- "Sorry, I didn't mean to upset you, there is no line, I just needed to know whether to do anything with an e-ticket or just wait."
- "I'll call you when I'm ready, now get behind the line at the pole."
- "Wow, a 'please' would have been appreciated, ma'am."
- "Why don't you get behind the line, *please*, asshole." She and her trainee laughed at me.

Ed note: Lest anyone mistakenly credits the rude UAL agent with originality, the above is an old joke, involving a new freshman at Princeton who asks a stuffy senior, "Excuse me my good man, but can you tell me where the library is at?" which evokes the derisive reply, "We at Princeton do not end our sentences in a preposition." to which the freshman responds, "Alright then, can you tell me where the library is at, asshole?"

- "Excuse me? What did you just call me?"
- "What did you hear?"
- I repeated what I heard.
- "I ain't sayin' I said it or not, but if the name applies."

Ed note: This is, of course, the expected level of discourse from someone paid minimal wage for their grade ten education.

- "What is your name? I can't believe this, I was the nicest person to you. This is unbelievable." [no answer] "What is your name, ma'am?"
- "Kay Jones."
- I went to report her to two older gentlemen who I thought might be supervisors. They didn't seem to know what to say.
- One asked: "In what context did she call you that?" As if the context should matter.
- I explained the sequence of events and they indicated it would be taken care of. I asked what would happen, and they gave me a card to report the incident to Norm Pettet at LAX-Customer Service. I asked if the agent's name was "K." or "Kay" Jones and they told me it was actually Angela Pulliam.
- I arrived in Dulles for a one hour layover and prepared to get off the plane to write a letter to United on my laptop. I checked at the gate whether I should take my bag (they said to leave it) and asked whether the flight would leave on time. I set my clock and wrote the letter at the Burger King next to the gate.
- Eight minutes prior to departure, I went back to the plane.
- Tomar Williams, a UAL agent: "It left."
- "What are you talking about? It's sitting right there."
- Ms. Williams started the process of making another ticket to get me on another flight.
- "Ma'am, my girlfriend is leaving to meet me at LaGuardia right now, my bag

is on that plane, I have an expensive camera in there, and all my clothes."

- "Sir, it's now five minutes to departure, you can't get on that plane."
- "I can't believe this, you're going to go through the hassle of putting me on another plane, inconveniencing me and my girlfriend to great lengths when the plane is sitting right there? I've never heard of anyone missing a plane because they were standing at a gate five minutes before the scheduled departure, this is nuts."

Ed note: Mr. Baumann hasn't read much of other passengers' stories on Untied.com. UAL frequently denies passengers boarding, even when they are at the gate well in advance of a scheduled departure. Unfortunately, in this case, the airline can claim that passengers are advised to be at the gate 30 minutes prior to departure, even if these were not, in fact, the instructions given to Mr. Baumann.

- Two others employees (apparently trainees) were present, one of whom started to say something to Ms. Williams, perhaps to let me on the plane. Ms. Williams shushed them, saying: "It's okay."
- While calling my girlfriend on my cellphone to keep her from going to La Guardia, I asked Ms. Williams about my bag.
- "You'll have to go to La Guardia and get it."
- "In a light jacket on the second coldest day of the year in NY? Not after all of this! I'd like it sent to my girlfriend's house, please. Can you please do that for me?"
- "For a price, we can arrange that."

Ed note: On occasion, speaking with UAL agents can feel a lot like dealing with the underworld.

- "But my camera..."
- "It'll be fine. You'll miss the next flight if you don't get moving."
- On the way to catch the other plane, UA 7350 to JFK, departing at 9:55pm, I called United customer service on my cellphone to complain about my horrible day.
- Julie Garcia in your Indianapolis office was extremely helpful, saying "Let's figure out what we can do to make this all better."

Ed note: While UAL is ordinarily very good at keeping their truly competent employees at a safe distance from customers, it seems they failed to do so on this occasion, as Ms. Garcia was able to intervene successfully on the passenger's behalf, despite the best efforts of agents at Dulles.

- I arrived huffing and sweaty at gate T14 -- I was flying to NY to see a specialist about my breathing problem. With twelve minutes until the scheduled flight time, I was told: "That flight has departed sir."
- Julie Garcia, to whom I was still talking on the cellphone, heard this and said, "Oh my God! I'm getting a supervisor, I'll be right back. Please hold, Mr. Baumann."
- I sat down in shock. At the previous gate, Ms. Williams said she didn't have to let me on if I wasn't ten minutes early, now this group said I had to be **twenty** minutes early.

Ed note: From UAL's own web site:

Please note that reservations are subject to cancellation if you are not available for boarding at the gate at least 10 minutes prior to departure for flights between U.S. points, 20 minutes to/from

Canada/Mexico and the Caribbean, and 30 minutes to/from all other International points.

Last we checked, Dulles and La Guardia were both in the U.S.

- I sat, waiting on hold, until Julie came back on the line. Just then, the ground crew said: "Sir, if you want to run to catch the plane, you can get on it."
- I was a mess when I arrived in NY at 1am, on a very cold night, and without my luggage, containing all my warm clothes.
- Around midnight, I called United and spoke with Karen Coyle, a Customer Service supervisor. She apologized profusely and noted my record so that my bag would be delivered with no charge, with record locator, PWMZTK. Ms. Coyle instructed me to keep all receipts for cabs, etc., and submit everything to United for consideration of reimbursement.
- I told her of my concern for my camera but was assured that it would be fine.

February 18, 2001

- According to George in United's National Baggage department at 12:30pm: "Your bag should arrive in a couple of hours."
- Through the rest of the afternoon, I tried to call the baggage department another 30 times for an update, but there was no answer.
- At 6:30pm, my bag still hadn't arrived and my calls to the baggage department were either met with busy signals or no answer
- We missed a dinner with my family, set up a week in advance, since I was still waiting for the bag (with all my warm clothes)
- Finally reached George at the baggage department. He told me: "Coupla' hours."
- I told George that I was going to eat close by with my girlfriend and asked him to call when my bag was being delivered so that we could be there to receive it.
- Several hours later, no bag and no call.
- I called again and again until I finally reached George.
- "Your bag was delivered to a 'Harold'. (Harold is one of my girlfriend's neighbors, an honest man whom we know and trust.)
- We got the bag from Harold and of course, my camera was gone, as were my meds.
- I called UAL headquarters the next day and related the entire story to Viktor Martin of Customer Relations.
- "I've never heard such a horrible story from a customer of United before. Please hold."

Ed note: Mr. Martin should spend a few minutes reading Untied.com.

- A few minutes later, Mr. Martin returned to tell me: "Your camera is not covered because your bag was not checked in. But if you were to call over to the baggage headquarters, you might be able to convince them to make an exception and get a 'partial payment' even though they're not liable. Also, we would be happy to offer you a discount coupon of \$100 off your next flight with United."

Ed note: For those who think those \$100 coupons are valuable, we challenge you to trade these in for cash.

- I was extremely upset with this insulting offer. I told Viktor that I did not want to be reimbursed only for my camera, but also for the camera's memory card, my airfare, and the cab rides, and that I thought a coupon for a free flight on United was more in order.
- "We don't keep coupons for free flights around to just give out."
- Being pawned off on another department to try to convince them to reimburse me, along with the offer of \$100 off my next flight was an absolute slap in the face.
- Viktor then told me: "Write up a letter with all the details and it will be forwarded on to Ms. Harvill."

February 23, 2001

- I wrote up the details and sent them by fax to Denise Harvill, Mr. Dutta, Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Norm Pettet (LAX Customer Service) of UAL, with the following breakdown:
 - \$303 for original airfare
 - \$46 for cab fare
 - \$18 for two hours of cellphone time at \$0.15 per minute
 - \$400 for an Olympus 450 digital camera plus 32 Meg memory card
 - \$180 for 60 tablets of Clariton at \$3 per pill
 - **Total: \$997**
- I offered to obtain a notarized letter from Mr. Hanson Hsu, a very well known and respected sound engineer with Sony Pictures, Sunset Studios, etc., verifying that I was showing him pictures of my girlfriend and me on the digital camera just before he dropped me off at the airport.
- I also offered to ask my doctor, Dr. Mazza, for a note confirming my two months supply of Clariton.

February 28, 2001

Thank you for contacting us again. I'm sorry you're dissatisfied with my previous response.

You asked us to re-examine your request and we've done so. All things considered, we do support our earlier decision. The good will offer [\$100 travel voucher] was not intended as compensation commensurate with your dissatisfaction. It was offered strictly in the interest of good customer relations. Your opinions and feedback about our operation will be very helpful to us during our efforts to provide better service. We hope you will reconsider and give United the opportunity to regain your trust. It is our genuine desire to provide service that will make United your airline of choice in the future.

Sincerely,
Viktor Martin
Customer Relations

IVM/ca
ref#: 717958C

- Along with this letter, United attached an application for their frequent flier club!

Ed note: Isn't that like a thug who beats you up, then gives you his business card in case you want another round? As we said before about United and the

underworld...

March 11, 2001

- I sent a follow-up note to Denise Harvill, asking for confirmation of receipt of my fax of February 23
- I indicated that my request for refund of airfare was made in response to the frustrating offer of a \$100 discount coupon made by Mr. Martin and that I was now only requesting reimbursement for my actual losses: the camera and medicine

March 14, 2001

Thank you for contacting us about your flight to New York City. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

I'm sorry to learn that you are missing a digital camera and your Clariton pills, which you had stored in an overhead bin. In hurrying to leave an aircraft, other passengers sometimes accidentally remove someone else's belongings. United's policy includes responsibility only for checked baggage; it does not include responsibility for missing items on the aircraft.

Thank you for allowing me to comment. We look forward to serving you on a United flight in the near future.

Viktor Martin
Customer Relations

IVM/ca
ref# 717958D

Ed note: Once again, demonstrating that United still hasn't managed to hire customer service representatives with basic reading or writing skills, nor a memory that extends beyond a few days, Mr. Martin doesn't appear to remember that Mr. Baumann left his belongings on board because he was not allowed back on the plane! A less generous interpretation, of course, is that Mr. Martin deliberately omitted this critical piece of information in his reply, since doing so would be an admission of liability.

March 25, 2001

- while Ms. Harvill has not replied to either my letter or fax, I put her name down as a contact when I went to the arbitrators for Small Claims Court in Los Angeles

Ed note: Will Ms. Harvill and company stick to their guns and wait for Mr. Baumann to collect in small claims court, or will they be a little more media-savvy and settle quickly? Stay tuned to find out...

February 21, 2001

We include here the text of a recent letter received from a United Airlines captain:

As a United Captain I'm sick and tired of flying with low time Black and Women

Pilots who can't fly the goddamn airplane. When management pencil whips the training records of these morons, people like me have to pick up the slack.

The paying passengers who fly with us expect to have qualified pilots, not minorities who simply are hired to meet the EEOC'S three-fourths rule: high school diplomas and 350 hours total flying time don't make in Chicago ORD in a winter snow storm. Get the goddamn black and white women [expletive deleted] out of Human Resources in Denver and put hiring back into the hands of White Pilots who know who should be hired.

Untied.com does not wish to promote racist attitudes and takes exception to the pilot's language. However, we have included the letter here because it illustrates several important points:

1. the questionable quality of some of the senior pilots flying United's planes;
2. the prejudicial/racial views that exist at the airline; and
3. the reality of UAL's failure to put passenger safety ahead of corporate politics.

While many of us might agree in general with a policy that gives women and minorities preferential treatment for job positions, even if their qualifications are lower than white males, this may not be the case when the job is a safety-critical one. For example, when it comes to choosing the surgeon who is operating on your heart or the captain who is flying your plane, most of us would probably prefer the best qualified individual at the controls.

The thinly veiled suggestion by the UAL Captain that all women and minorities are bad pilots is of course absurd. The fact that a UAL Captain would even make such a remark is disturbing in itself. However, as other UAL insiders have commented, there is little doubt that through its long-standing tradition of preferential hiring, United willfully puts passengers at risk.

If, in order to meet quotas, United is putting less qualified pilots at the controls during passenger flights, this is simply unconscionable. Under normal circumstances, one good pilot can generally compensate for another who may be deficient. However, during an emergency, when both pilots are operating at their full capacity, this is not the case and passengers' lives are unnecessarily put at risk.

Assuming that UAL was truly interested in supporting women and minorities, they might consider:

- promoting a work environment that was not rampant with racist and sexist attitudes, and
- developing a safe and effective conduit for such pilots that does not involve the use of passenger flights as training exercises **until** the pilots have demonstrated their competency

As we did when other safety questions were raised about United Airlines, Untied.com again challenges UAL to rebut these charges and discuss the pilot's concerns through dialogue at our site -- in an open and public forum.

September 8, 2000

From a recent UAL Press Release:

United Airlines Opens \$4.5 Million State-of-the-Art Reservations Center In

Honolulu, Hawaii

CHICAGO, Sept. 8 /PRNewswire/ -- United Airlines today announced that it will open its newly renovated Reservations office in Honolulu, Hawaii, on Sunday, September 10th. The facility will accommodate an additional 200 employees -- part of the company's commitment to the State of Hawaii. "United invested approximately \$4.5 million dollars in this new reservations call center," said Norm Reeder, United Airlines managing director-Hawaii. "This facility is equipped with the latest technology, from top-of-the-line computer equipment to new multimedia conference rooms. This is another example of United's commitment to Hawaii's future as a key destination for both business and pleasure."

"The new state-of-the-art facility will help our employees continue to develop United's reputation of providing exemplary customer service," Reeder added.

Perhaps Mr. Reeder doesn't get out of his office much these days -- in which case, he can be excused for missing the advertisements his own airline is running, in which CEO Goodwin himself apologizes for United's service (see below), or the most recent DOT performance statistics that show UAL to be at the bottom of the customer service basket in terms of passenger complaints. Exemplary customer service? Who are you trying to fool?

NEW YORK, Aug 24 (Reuters) - United Airlines said it would begin airing a 30-second television advertisement in which its Chairman James Goodwin apologises for inconveniences suffered over the past few weeks.

Chicago-based United, owned by UAL Corp. (NYSE:UAL), has already apologised and admitted operational failures in newspaper ads around the country.

September 1, 2000

United Flight Attendants Filing for Picketing Permits at Airports Around the World

Airline's Abuse of Flight Attendants Rampant

Informational Pickets to be set up in 12 U.S. cities, 7 countries around the world

Washington, DC -- Abuse of flight attendants by United Airlines management has driven flight attendants to apply for picketing permits at airports around the world, including those in United's base cities: Boston, Chicago, Denver, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, DC, Frankfurt (Germany), Hong Kong, London (England), Narita (Japan), Paris (France), Santiago (Chile), Taipei (Taiwan).

United's flight attendants, represented by the Association of Flight Attendants, AFL-CIO, will begin informational picketing in the coming days. The protests are aimed at management's systematic abuse of its front-line employees who have suffered through the airline's infamous summer of delays and cancellations.

"Flight attendants stood by United in its summer of turmoil," said Linda Farrow, President of the AFA Master Executive Council at United. "In return, management has wreaked havoc on our family and personal lives by systematically breaking the rules it has agreed to in our contract and by heavy-handed discipline. Now we're fighting back."

In preparation for the protests, flight attendant leaders have torn down bulletin boards in crew lounges and replaced them with screaming green signs that read, "We are mad as hell and we are not going to take it anymore."

Flight attendants have taken their fight directly to United CEO Jim Goodwin. Linda Farrow and MEC Secretary Treasurer Bobbie Pilkington met with Goodwin on August 29 and demanded that abuses and contract violations stop immediately. Farrow also demanded that discipline doled out (including letters in employee files, suspensions and termination) during the airline's "critical coverage" period be rescinded and employees made whole. United's abuses also include:

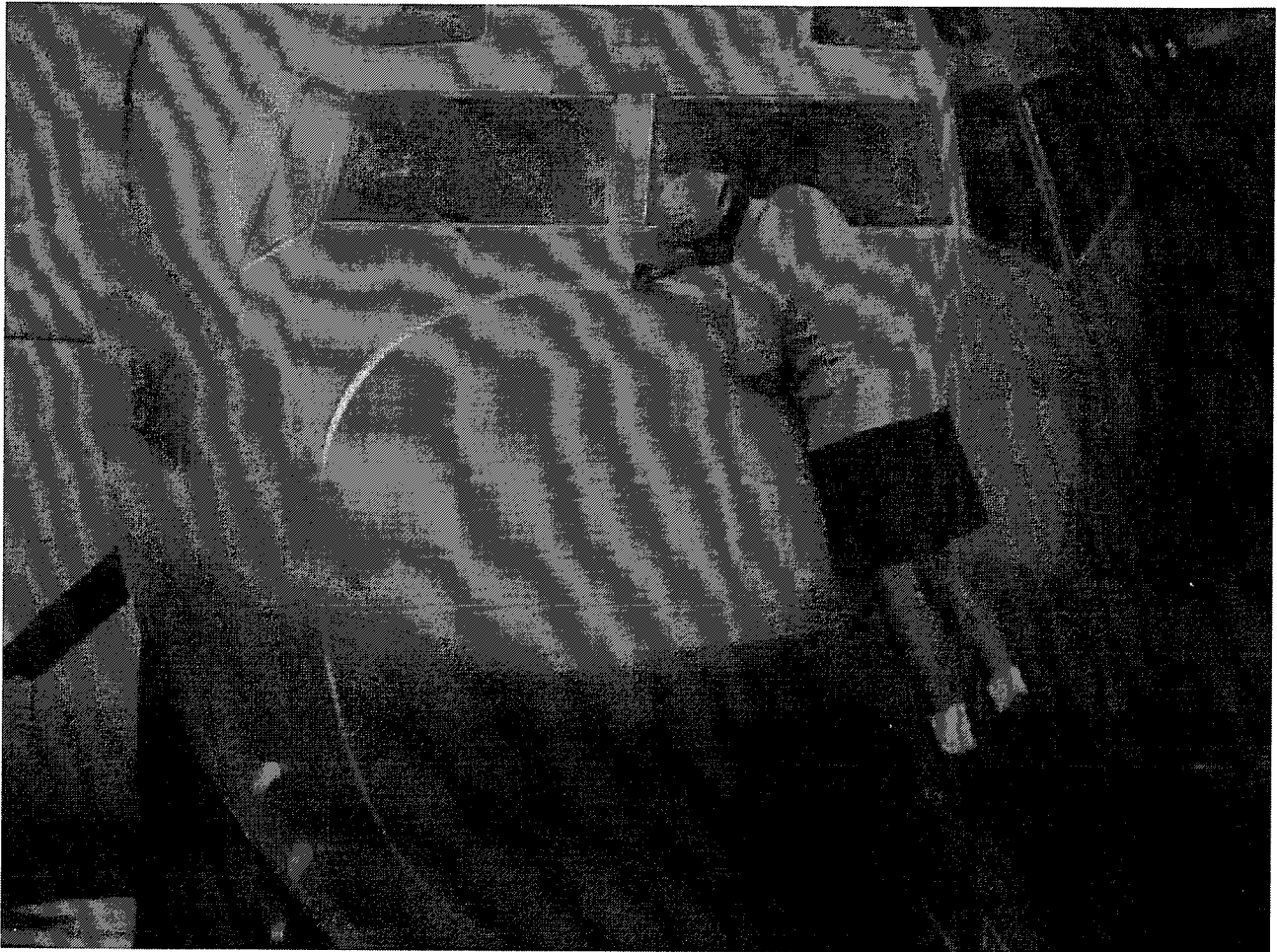
- frequent work schedule changes due to scheduling problems created by mismanagement,
- failure to assign hotels or assigning flight attendants to drug-infested, unsafe hotels,
- forcing flight attendants to sleep on aircraft or in crew lounges on layovers,
- failure to notify flight attendants of flight cancellations or delays, forcing frequent unnecessary trips (many flight attendants commute to their base airport from another airport) and more time away from home,
- lies to flight attendants and paper apologies when abuses and violations occur, only to have the same contract violations happen again.

AFA, the world's largest flight attendant union, represents the 25,000 United Airlines flight attendants.

Jul 24, 2000

Kindly contributed by Joel Snow:

Thought you might enjoy this. I was waiting for a United flight from Tulsa last week when they announced over the PA that there was a mechanical delay with the aircraft in Denver. After a 3 hour wait, our aircraft arrived from Denver. I began talking with the flight crew who were waiting with the rest of us to board the plane and they informed me that the mechanics were delaying flights on purpose, as their contract had recently expired. Just then, over the PA came another announcement that there would be another "short delay" so the mechanics could make an additional repair to the exterior of the aircraft. I looked outside and saw what you see in the attached picture: a mechanic using duct tape to secure the nose cone onto the body of the plane. I got out my digital camera to save the moment for posterity.



As mentioned throughout the site, we endeavour to be fair to UAL, and when readers provide corrections to articles or complaints, we post these as soon as possible. Here's a response we received from Jim Bentley regarding the photo, above:

I am writing in response to your feature of the week dated Jul 24, 2000 from Joel Snow. The article states that mechanics are delaying flights on purpose, this is not true. What mechanics are doing is replying to mechanical complaints from the pilots. Mr. Snow states that a UAL mechanic is "duct taping" the nose cone. What Mr. Snow saw was a mechanic doing what is standard maintenance practice in the industry. When there is a complaint which involves vibration, squealing or other noises that can not be verified on the ground we seal the suspected source with a special metal tape. After each flight a small section of this tape is removed until the source or area is found and can be properly repaired. Also what you see is not a UAL mechanic but one that is contracted by UAL to perform maintenance at stations where UAL mechanics are not employed, as is the case in Tulsa.

May 4, 2000

This comes from a UAL-insider, exposing, yet again, how things get done at United Airlines.

With the pilots contract coming up, they have been a little bit more nit-picky when it comes closer to departure time, and usually over something petty. Also coming up soon is our stockholder's meeting; there will be some incentives for management to get bonuses based on the on-time performance.

Management here in SFO, as a result, has done some serious overreaction to both of these. We have now been having to close the doors on the planes earlier. This causes a lot of problems---gives us only three minutes to clear all standby passengers, plus with printing the crew papers early, this also gives the flight attendants insufficient information on the premiers/special needs passengers--if they are not shown as being checked in.

At the same time, we do stay with the 10-minute cutoff. So, sometimes we have to "jump the gun" and release the seats early(which, technically, we are not supposed to do), which does cause some problems. Or leave standby passengers behind.

For one thing, the agents resent the fact that we have to leave some employees behind. But pass-riding is a privlidge and not a right. That is not really the issue; we are leaving people with paid tickets who are on standby behind, due to time constraints.

We are rushed. We are leaving people who have bought tickets behind. We are not giving good customer service. And this is all because of the overreaction of the management here in San Francisco.

There are enough problems with construction, runways, and air traffic control---SFO has a really bad reputation. SFO will also be a zoo due to more international flights this summer, but at the same time, the new customs facility will not be open until September. The last thing we need to do is to inconvenience the passengers further.

Management at SFO is way out of line by imposing these unrealistic time frames on flight close-outs.

Let's have all employee-owners vote AGAINST the proposals and the retention of the board of directors.

April 26, 2000

This writeup comes from Doc Searls' [cluetrain WebLog](#) for Tuesday, April 25, describing the keynote talk given at the [Futurize West](#) event held on April 20-21 in Napa, California.

Go fly yourselves: At last week's first (also enlightening and fun) Futurize West event in Napa Valley, a number of very clueful people took to the stage. The first was Dr. Jeremy Cooperstock [...] who maintains the Untied Airlines site, which gleefully exposes the persistent cluelessness of United Airlines. These range from run-of-the-jetway customer complaints to the scary safety concerns expressed by a former pilot. Most remarkable is United's apparently resolute oblivity to the extensive substance of the Untied site. Evidence (in borrowed html):

Total passengers complaints sent to UAL via Untied.com	Copied to Denise Harvill, Director of Customer Relations	Copied to Jim Goodwin, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer	Replies received from UAL
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

By contrast, a friend of mine had one bad experience with Southwest Airlines, wrote to its president, Herb Kelleher, and promptly got back a free ticket with a

personal letter of apology. A rather clueful difference.

April 19, 2000

Either our reply tracking system at Untied.com has motivated a change at UAL or congratulations are due to Larry D. DeShon, Vice President of Customer Satisfaction at United Airlines. Shortly after taking on this new position at the airline, customer complaints are now being answered in a somewhat different manner. Perhaps Mr. DeShon recognizes that form letter replies to customer complaints are often **unsatisfactory** (gee, we could have told him that two years ago). Here's the text of a reply letter a former passenger recently received:

Thank you very much for writing about your recent experience with our airline. On behalf of United Airlines, I sincerely apologize for the delay in our response.

We want to offer you our sincere apologies for the dissatisfaction you've expressed. Because we're presently in the process of converting our computer equipment used in responding to customers, we're unable to give you a personalized reply which we would prefer. We can assure you your letter will be brought to the attention of appropriate management and your issues placed on file with our Customer Relations Department. Every effort will be made to correct service problems so that we can serve you better.

Please return this message with your name(s) and mailing address. I will be happy to work with our Customer Relations Department to make sure you are sent a more tangible expression of our apology. Your business is important to United and we hope it will come in hand and allow us an opportunity to provide more acceptable service.

Sincerely,
Amy

Sounds promising? We're not so sure. Why does United Airlines have to change their computer equipment in order to generate "personalized" replies? Since their old reply letters used to include the individual's name, we can assume that they already had keyboards available... what more do they need?

April 1, 2000

Some UAL-supportive letters are too good to ignore...

● **Tue, 28 Mar 2000 20:18:57 EST**

I hope you respond to this. If you don't, it would prove you are a coward. If you are saying United really sucks in service, good for you (sarcastically). My mother is a flight attendant for United and has been for 35 YEARS. United is a good airline, aside from the occasional bad breakfast in coach. I have flown United about 20-40 times and they are a good airline. Pretty good seats, service is great, the people on the flights take care of you. And by the way, the UAL Flight Attendant Union didn't take part in buying UAL. They are friendly. Some flight attendants (and that goes for every airline, including United) are rude. I'm sorry to say it. In comment to delays, bad weather. Hey buddy, their looking out for your sorry ass so you don't get in a crash. Every airline has cancellations. Number one priority, SAFETY. No. 2, if you're saying that all UAL employees are idiots with low temper and don't care, you are one hell of a stupid ass redneck. My question is this: If you bitch so much about United, just because you alone and about 1124365387648659879457537 of passengers have had bad experiences, could be do to this: 1. Stress. 2. Something bad happened. (goes for Flight Attendants). My question is why make

up a site that hates United all because of your little problems? You probably even haven't flown them very often. One more question: United is the largest US carrier, possibly biggest World airline with more flights than any other airline and the 2nd largest fleet of aircraft. All of this due to profits by customers, that being due to them coming back and back and back. And if what you are saying is true (which it isn't), then how can United strive, or even do well? Now don't think I'm some asshole thinking I'm always right and anyone who says otherwise is wrong, because I'm not. I also don't want you to think that you're right and I'm just some dumbass who says otherwise. Just read it and send me back a response, if you don't, you'll just prove what an ass you might be.

Sincerely,
Ryan Foley

Untied.com's response:

Mr. Foley,

If I were a UAL shareholder, I'd nominate you for a senior board position. It is clear from your thoughtful and insightful analysis of the airline industry in general, and passenger relations with United Airlines in particular, that you are prime management material.

Should you succeed Mr. Goodwin in his role as CEO, or Mr. Kiker in Advertising and Communications (a post in which your honesty and openness concerning United's attitude toward its passengers would be a valuable asset) it would help reassure me that United is committed to hiring and retaining the best people for the job. I'm sure the thousands of readers of this site would agree.

With best regards,

Jeremy Cooperstock
Untied.com.

March 2000

This is the text of a letter sent by United Airlines to the lawyer representing the employees who were sexually harassed by a male supervisor.

January 21, 2000

VIA Federal Express
Cary E. Donham, Esq.
Shefksy and Froelich Ltd.
444 North Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Dear Mr. Donham:

We have received your proposed severance agreements for [...]. We have carefully considered the proposed agreements as well as the facts surrounding your clients' claims. It is United's position that we took prompt, effective, remedial action with regard to your clients. We therefore decline to enter into these or other severance agreements.

Our internal investigations have been completed, as we told you in our meeting of December 21, 1999. There will be no arbitration of the decision made with regard

to [...] who is no longer employed at this company.

We encourage your clients to return to their jobs at United and believe that they will find those jobs rewarding, safe and free of harassment or retaliation of any kind.

Ed note: Given the experiences of other former UAL employees this reassurance may seem somewhat hollow.

If they wish to return to work and then immediately begin a transfer process, we will work with your clients to find jobs for which they are qualified elsewhere in the company. As we discussed on December 21, 1999, United employes more than 100,000 employees in numerous locations.

If your clients wish to return to their former jobs, or to return and then request competitive transfers to other United jobs for which they are qualified, please tell them to call [...] on or before Tuesday, February 15, 2000.

If we have not heard from you on behalf of your clients by 5:00 p.m. CST on Friday, February 25, 2000, we will consider your clients to have resigned from United Airlines effective Monday, February 28, 2000.

Yours very truly,

Nancy J. Gordon
Senior Counsel - Litigation

More feedback following the announcement...

● **Tue, 22 Feb 2000 07:35:25 -0800 (PST)**

I wanted to voice my concerns over what has happened at United Airlines. I am just a passenger and do not work for the carrier. It looks like United has a big problem on their hands. Reading all of the employee and passenger posts has opened my eyes. Does the company have any policy in place with a stance against sexual harassment? If they do it does not look like it is working? I hate to admit it but this website makes it clear that UAL is the poster child of sexual harassment -- shame on you United.

● **Tue, 22 Feb 2000 10:26:03 EST**

I am an employee of United Airlines and am here to say sexual harassment at United Airlines is nothing new. There are many women I know who work out on the ramp who are the victims of sexual harassment. Any employee will attest to the fact that when you go to the bathrooms, there is nothing but smut and garbage etched all over the bathroom walls depicting women as sex objects. If I had a dollar for every time I saw a woman get grabbed or touched, I would be rich. The supervisors even take part in the sickness by "joking around" in a disgusting way by grabbing each other's butts and laughing. What kind of message does that send to the employees? I think more people need to step forward, it's about time!

● **Sat, 19 Feb 2000 22:00:00 -0800 (PST)**

I just looked at the newspaper and saw the charges filed against the company. I half-believed this happened until I found this website and read about other people's stories. I do not know if United reads this website because if they do not, they should. The letter that United sent to the attorney representing these men is very

disturbing. I did not see any compassion on the part of the company for what I know must have been very embarrassing for these employees. I am writing a letter to United's customer service department about this and asking them to explain how something like this could happen. I and my family are totally disgusted.

● **Fri, 18 Feb 2000 18:24:12 -0800 (PST)**

I have stock in United Airlines and read about this on the Yahoo website. As a woman who knows what it is liked to put up with sexual harassment, I was sickened to read about this incident. What is very disturbing to me is the lack of concern for these employees.

How can a company say it is safe to return to work and at the same time try and force a transfer (according to the United Letter). My family and I always flew United but after hearing about this I think we will be looking elsewhere. I also read about how other employees are treated on this site and it made me sick.

● **Fri, 18 Feb 2000 17:27:08 -0800 (PST)**

I just want to comment on the letter that Nancy Gordon wrote from United Airlines to these men that were harassed at work. I looked at the letter and thought WHAT A JOKE! From the news article it seems these employees were attacked by a sick individual! United has the nerve to try and say now that there work environment will be "free of harassment". Did you see an apology in the letter from the company about what happened? I didn't. I would not send my dog to work at that company. I am calling United today and transferring my milage plus miles to another partner carrier. There is no way I would endorse such a company.

● **Fri, 18 Feb 2000 05:36:00 -0800 (PST)**

Please do not use my name but after reading how five male employees came forward after they were sexually harassed, I have decided to step forward too and will be going down to the EEOC on Tuesday with another employee. I was sexually harassed by a supervisor at United and reported it and the airline did nothing about it. Thanks for letting us know that we do not have to be afraid anymore.

● **Thu, 17 Feb 2000 05:43:27 -0800 (PST)**

I do not want to say who I am but I am one of many female employees who work at O'Hare and sexual harassment on the ramp is no stranger. I have told the company several times about this problem and I always get ignored!

● **Thu, 17 Feb 2000 05:37:56 -0800 (PST)**

I read about how five men were sexually harassed by UAL in the newspapers and now on this website. I think it is just terrible what happened to these men. After reading the other stories on this website about sexual harassment at United, it is clear to me that this company does not care about its employees. Maybe once the Federal Government investigates them, United will treat people better. I will never fly this airline again after reading about this.

Ever wonder why the quality of United Airlines' Customer Relations seems to be somewhat lacking? Take a look at the following internal job posting, provided courtesy of an anonymous UAL employee, for our entertainment. Thank you!

THIS IS A TEMP POSITION

Performs as a team member of the correspondence center to assist in resolving customer complaints, compliments and inquiries. Monitors trends and maintains established productivity standards. Investigates matters and determines what action can be taken to serve customers needs, promote good will and influences customer intent to repurchase, as appropriate. Approves compensation and settlements, within delegated authority. Provides other assistance regarding customer relations functions, as appropriate.

Education: Tenth grade completion.

Experience: Two years of public contact work with strong written and verbal skills, proficiency in keyboarding and automated systems.

Last update Sunday, February 2, 2003. Copyright © 2003 Jeremy Cooperstock. All Rights Reserved.