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Subject: Re: Regaining Momentum

Posted by [artisticrainey](#) on Tue, 24 Jul 2012 00:07:12 GMT

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Tuesday, September 18; 10:15 AM; BWI Airport (2:15 AM the next day on Tracy Island)

The flight attendant greeting the boarding passengers recognized the older black woman who was approaching the doorway. "Mrs. Matumbo! I'm so pleased to see you again, and very happy that you're traveling with us. After what happened the last time, a lot of the survivors still find it difficult to fly, and those who have, have taken another airline."

Lena stopped out of the way of passengers behind her and smiled at the attendant. "Dat's silly of dem. It wasn't at all de fault of de airline; it was dat air traffic controller. Personally, I tink it was due to de captain's abilities dat de deats and injuries weren't more extensive."

"You are so right. I just had a mild concussion and a few bruises. I was back in the air in only a couple of weeks. I wasn't about to let what happened stop me from doing what I love."

"Good for you. Have you heard any more about de captain? How is he doing?"

"He is doing better than the doctors expected him to, but I doubt he'll be able to fly a commercial jet again. His legs were so severely damaged, he'll be in a wheelchair for the rest of his life, unless someone comes up with some new medical procedure to heal them completely. Oh, and he proposed to that woman he was seeing, and she accepted."

"Dat's wonderful! But if her brotter heard, I'm sure he isn't happy about dat."

The flight attendant chuckled, then became serious again. "I understand he went ballistic when he heard his sister was visiting the captain at the hospital, and had to be sedated. I believe he's in a psychiatric ward somewhere, and I don't really want to know where."

"I don't blame you. But I tink I'd better take my seat. I'd ratter be in it when we take off." Lena winked at the attendant and headed down the aisle. She was in the second row of the first class seats, and found herself next to a middle aged woman, who looked frightened. Once she was settled, she turned to the woman and smiled. "Is dis your first flight?"

"No, but it is on this airline. I have to get to Seattle for the birth of my first grandchild, and there were no other flights available. And after what happened last month to one of their flights out of Denver, I'm not so sure I want to be here. You heard about that crash, didn't you?"

"Hear about it? Honey, I was in it. As you can see, I survived. And out of de tree hundred or so passengers and crew aboard, less dan two dozen died. As tragic as dat was, it could have been a lot worse."

"You were a victim of the crash and still are flying with this airline? Why?"

"It wasn't de airline's fault, nor de fault of de people flying de jet. It was caused by an air traffic controller who had serious personal problems, and took dem out on de captain of de plane. But

dis airline has very capable people, and dey did a good job, under dose circumstances."

"Thank you, Mrs. Matumbo. I appreciate your words very much."

Startled, Lena turned to see two men standing in the aisle beside her seat. One was in a business suit, and the other in a pilot's uniform. The latter continued. "I was the co-pilot on that flight, ma'am, and I really want to thank you for what you just said."

"It's only de trut, young man."

"When Michelle - the flight attendant - told me you had come aboard, I had to meet you," the other man said as the co-pilot excused himself and headed back to the cockpit. "I am Ron Parker, vice president of Human Relations. I would like to ask a favor of you. Would you mind if we used your name as a survivor of the crash who isn't afraid to fly with us again? It would be in a press release, and perhaps in an advertisement down the road."

"You can use my name in de press release, Mr. Parker," she replied. "But I'm not so sure about de rest of it."

"Excuse me, sir," the attendant interrupted. "But we need to get going, so you'll have to take your seat and buckle in."

"All right," the businessman replied. "Mrs. Matumbo, I hope we can chat later during the flight."

"Dat will be fine."

Mr. Parker smiled and quickly got into his seat. Lena heard his buckle snap shut as the plane pulled away from the terminal. She turned to her seatmate, who was regarding her with some astonishment. "Look, I love my job, part of which is to fly to a different part of de country each mont. I'm not going to let some - well, I'm not going to get into name calling here. I'm not going to let anyone stop me from doing my job. Don't worry; we'll be fine. And when you have to travel, flying is still one of de safest ways to go."

The other woman relaxed slightly. "That's true. And if you can do it, after going through what you did, I guess I can, too."

They smiled at each other, and soon the jet was speeding down the runway.

Posted by hobbeth on August 31, 2007

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