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# JetBlue flight attendant says he's surprised by attention

New York Times News Service

**NEW YORK** — Steven Slater, the JetBlue flight attendant who cursed out a passenger on the intercom and then slid out of the plane feet first, had long daydreamed about deploying an escape chute. But he never thought he would.

"For 20 years, I thought about it," he said in an interview Wednesday morning. "But you never think you're going to do it."

On Monday, on a full flight from Pittsburgh that had just landed at Kennedy International Airport, he did it — after having a confrontation with a passenger whose bag hit him in the head. He took the slide after getting on the plane's address system to curse out the passenger and thank others for his two-decade career.

During the interview, which was brief because it took place in the elevator as he was leaving the building where he had

spent the night, Slater also said that he did not realize while in custody that he had slid into the national spotlight.

"I had no idea," he said. "I didn't have access to much information, so to come out to all of this is a little bit overwhelming."

Slater, who had been arraigned Tuesday on charges that included criminal mischief and reckless endangerment, also said he did not realize that he had been widely hailed as a hero.

"I missed that part," he said. Slater would not discuss details of the confrontation. Neither would JetBlue, although it posted a 146-word statement on a company blog under the headline "Sometimes the Weird News Is About Us."

"Perhaps you heard a little story about one of our flight attendants?" the post said. "While



Slater

we can't discuss the details of what is an ongoing investigation, plenty of others have already formed opinions on the matter. Like, the entire Internet."

The post did not mention that, according to a spokesman, Slater had been "removed from duty." The spokesman would not say if Slater was still being paid.

Slater retreated to the apartment building, where a friend lives, after posting \$2,500 bail Tuesday night. On Wednesday, after stepping off the elevator and climbing into his Jeep in the parking garage, a reporter asked where he was headed.

"Here, there and everywhere," he said, smiling and pulling on his seat belt.

A TV producer asked if he had been surprised by the media attention.

"Blown away," he said.

## Son of former VP calls Obama worst president ever

The Associated Press

**PHOENIX** — The son of former Vice President Dan Quayle unveiled a TV campaign ad Wednesday in his bid for Congress in which he calls President Barack Obama "the worst president in history" and tells Arizona voters that he wants to "knock the hell" out of Washington.

Ben Quayle's provocative ad, aimed at voters in Arizona's 3rd Congressional District ahead of the Aug. 24 GOP primary, was released amid allegations that he posted items under an alias

for a racy social website a few years ago.

In the campaign ad, the 33-year-old Quayle faces the camera directly and begins by saying, "Barack Obama is the worst president in history."

He goes on to implore voters to send him to Congress: "I love Arizona. I was raised right. Somebody has to go to Washington and knock the hell out of the place."

The ad was to begin airing Wednesday on Phoenix-area TV stations and was posted on the Internet.

Quayle, who is a lawyer and

managing director of a Scottsdale, Ariz., investment firm, has never held elected office. But he has emerged as the top fundraiser in the crowded field. He is the son of Dan Quayle, a former Indiana senator and vice president under George H.W. Bush.

Recent controversy over the racy website, which was aimed at Scottsdale's nightlife, has livened up the race, with Quayle's campaign this week calling the allegations a "smear of the sort that has been trafficked by several of the candidates in this campaign for months."

## Death row

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which some legal advisers say can show up in jury selection or even a prosecutor's decision to seek the death penalty.

"Not all of this is conscious," said Ken Rose, a staff attorney for the Center for Death Penalty Litigation in Durham. "Not all of this is intentional discrimination ... but the statistics tell the story."

Those motions filed in Guilford County Superior Court cite parts of two recent studies, including one by the Michigan State University Law School, which found that in North Carolina between 1990 and 1999, cases with a white victim were 2.6 times more likely to end in death sentences. In Guilford County, the defendants have been 4.1 times as likely to receive a death sentence when the victim was white.

John Henry Thompson, convicted of shooting Kenneth Bruhmuller twice in the face during a robbery inside a Domino's Pizza store on Chapman Street in 2001, claimed prosecutors wouldn't even accept a guilty plea in exchange for life in prison without parole.

Thompson is black. Bruhmuller was white.

Thompson's attorney cited several examples of other local death-sentence-eligible cases in which the victims were not white and the defendants were able to avoid a capital trial.

"The logic is that under the Racial Justice Act, if you can show that at the time of your trial there was a significant dis-



Other Guilford inmates who are on death row include John Henry Thompson, left, and Walic Christopher Thomas.

parity in the use of the death penalty by race of victim or race of defendant or in the proceeding ... you are entitled to relief," Rose said.

A single black woman was on the jury that convicted Walic Christopher Thomas in 1996 of stabbing white UNC student Kenny Dale Tuttle more than 30 times the year before.

At his trial, police said Thomas, who is black, went to Tuttle's house on Holden Road about 1 a.m., knocked on the door, and asked Tuttle to call him a cab.

"They found him guilty so fast they were afraid the judge would call for a mistrial, so they waited one day to give the judge the verdict," Tuttle's father, Kenneth Tuttle of King, says a juror told him. "There was a black lady on the jury that found him guilty and that gave him a death sentence. There was a black lady that testified against him, that he beat her up and left her for dead ... and he served time for that. He was just so mean."

"I guess if you are sitting there on death row, you'll grab for anything that comes by,"

Tuttle said.

Duke University law professor James Coleman says there is a misunderstanding of the scope of the issue.

"That's not to say that when you have an all-white jury, you have a jury of racists," said Coleman, the co-director of the school's wrongful convictions clinic. "The point is you've manipulated the jury to exclude a group of experiences in the community that are relevant in cases."

That's even in the case of Warren, the white truck driver later deemed a serial killer who strangled Katherine Noel Johnson of High Point, a white UNC-Chapel Hill student, and stuffed her nude body in the trunk of her car, according to the motion Warren's attorney filed.

Coleman has read explanations given in not seating black jurors and said they sometimes seem made up — a black woman excluded for being the same age as the defendant when two white women of the same age are left on.

Coleman said the result of the death row racial bias motions will be a stronger legal system by ensuring juries are more reflective of the community.

"That prosecutors (in capital cases) will say we've just got to let a jury of different backgrounds decide, and if they decide to sentence the person to life in prison, well that's what the law permits," Coleman said.

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## Marriage

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and education differences, the study said.

But the racial gap lessens when religious similarities come into the mix.

"What this study suggests is that religion is one of the key factors narrowing the racial divide in relationship quality in the United States," Wilcox said.

The strongest difference-maker for couples was spiritual activities such as praying or reading the Bible.

"Praying together as a couple is something that is very intimate for people who are religious," Wilcox said. "It adds another level of closeness to a

relationship."

The findings bear out what the Rev. James Terrell, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Northwest Washington, has observed among his parishioners.

"People seem to do better when they think there is a spiritual aspect to their marriage," Terrell said. That includes services and praying, but also "seeking the Lord in terms of resolving problems and differences," he said. "Without a doubt, it helps to keep a marriage together."

Still, the study showed religion did not have positive effects for all.

When one partner attends services regularly and the other one does not, relationship satisfaction is lower.

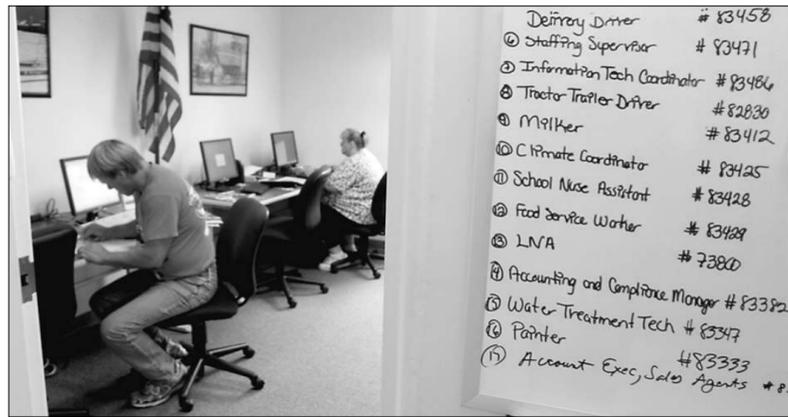
Two nonreligious partners are more content, the study

found.

"When couples do things together — whether it's bird-watching, playing tennis or attending church — they tend to do better," says Wilcox, and "when they don't share these activities — particularly when they are important — couples are more likely to suffer."

The results are based on a new analysis of a 2006 nationwide survey of 1,387 adults ages 18 to 59. Nearly 90 percent were married and the others were cohabiting.

The study had limits — relying on interviews with one partner in a marriage, for example, rather than both. Researchers controlled for income, age and education but not for other factors that might lead to relationship satisfaction, such as personality traits.



TOBY TALBOT/The Associated Press

A list of job openings hangs in the Vermont Department of Labor Resource center in Barre, Vt., last week. Unemployment is high but some economic sectors are showing slight improvements.

## Economy

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fade in coming months, and other positives may moderate too.

One of them is business investment, a rare pleasant surprise this year. Investment in software and computers was put on hold last year amid uncertainty and began to pick up late last year. From April to June, business investment in equipment and software grew at an annualized rate of 22 percent. That strong pace may not last, however.

"Based on some of the surveys we've done on our members, business investment, while positive, is not going to be growing as fast," said David Huether, the chief economist for the National Association of Manufacturers. "Business investment won't be as much as a driver."

Manufacturing output is likely to keep growing, he said, but at a moderating pace as demand dips.

Another bright spot is growth in exports, which Huether said have grown in double digits for four consecutive quarters, 10.3 percent from April to June in the latest reading.

"That hasn't happened in over two decades, and that is especially encouraging for (U.S.) manufacturers, since well over a quarter of what we make we sell overseas," he said.

However, while exports boost GDP, imports reduce it, and in the second quarter, imports grew at a pace that was more than twice as fast as exports. And U.S. exports slipped 1.3 percent in June, the government reported

Wednesday, underscoring fears that the economy is weakening.

In normal business cycles when growth contracts, then rebounds relatively fast, a key driver is pent-up demand for goods and services. When there's pent-up demand, businesses and consumers who have sat on the sidelines begin spending again and make up for lost time.

"We didn't see that this time around, partly because of the wealth evaporation. You usually don't see ... the net wealth loss — big, big losses in wealth," said Martin Regalia, the chief economist for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

By his calculation, Americans have lost \$14 trillion in wealth between the plunge in stock prices and falling home prices. About \$5 trillion of that has come back with last year's rebound in stocks and this year's slight gains.

Consumers, who drive 70 percent of U.S. economic activity, are still shell-shocked.

"We probably have \$10 trillion lost in people's net worth and until we start seeing that repaired, people are going to be hesitant about borrowing more," Regalia said. "People are going to try to save a little more and spend less ... and none of that contributes to short-term growth. Good stuff, but in the short run it doesn't help the economy grow."

Not all analysts are so gloomy.

"There is a widespread impression this is the weakest recovery in the postwar era. While the speed and character of this recovery is disappointing compared to many postwar recoveries, it is not the worst as exports. And U.S. exports slipped 1.3 percent in June, the government reported

ment, in an Aug. 5 analysis of the economy. "Actually, in its first year, the contemporary recovery has outpaced the last two recoveries in terms of real GDP growth, job creation and profits!"

Historically, recoveries unfold like this: The economy slows, a dip in inflation follows, and the Federal Reserve lowers lending rates. Banks follow suit. Lower borrowing costs entice businesses to expand and consumers to take out loans for cars and houses. It all propels the economy out of contraction and back into growth.

This time, however, the U.S. economy is emerging from a financial crisis, the largest since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Banks still aren't lending, consumers aren't spending, and employers aren't hiring enough to make the recovery hum.

That's normal for a recovery from a massive financial crisis, said Carmen Reinhart, a University of Maryland economist who co-authored the book "This Time is Different," which chronicled 800 years of financial crises. What these crises share in common, she and Harvard economist Ken Rogoff conclude, is a huge debt build-up sparks the crisis and takes years to work off.

"Debt overhangs are not things you work out of very quickly, and that is sort of the ball and chain we are dragging around here," Reinhart said. She likens the U.S. recovery to the lost decade of the 1980s for debt-ridden Latin American nations and the 1990s in Japan.

"We're going to be paying for this in terms of lower growth in the future, the near future," she said.

## Jobs

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With Disabilities Act, he said. "It's definitely a good sign," Moff said. "That means the company is saying, 'We're betting on the future.'"

His company has heard from medical practices, manufacturers, small universities and a couple of banks, to name a few.

Graham has seen demand across the board for purchasing managers, nurse practitioners and physician's assistants, forklift drivers, production workers, office managers, supervisors in manufacturing, accounts payable and clerks.

Still, that's just one bright spot in the waves of unem-

ployed people whom Graham knows are still looking for jobs.

"It's not uncommon for us to take calls from 400-plus people a day," he said.

Those names become drops in the database of 38,000 that Graham's company maintains.

Moff also does recruiting for companies on a more targeted level. He, too, is seeing an increase in calls from hiring companies.

"In the last several months we've seen more organizations starting to look for people," he said.

Graham also says more companies are asking for workers enrolled in a "temporary to permanent" position where the hiring company and the worker get to evaluate one another. Those workers have about an 85 percent chance of landing a permanent job,

he said.

The American Staffing Association says that staffing employment is up 25 percent in July compared with July a year ago. The association has also published a paper showing that temporary staffing is a sign of more solid economic recovery three to six months later.

Companies also want to keep the good employees they have as opportunities grow, Moff said.

"Business is getting better," he said. "Their teams have changed, so they want to make sure their managers have the skills they need to engage their people so they'll stay, to make sure people don't bolt."

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