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Association, there had been a rise in conflict on flights related to disobedient passengers (passengers who don't follow rules such as not smoking or ignoring safety directives). The article indicated that the primary role of the attendant was to insure the safety of passengers. This belief conflicted with the assumption of many passengers that attendants are there to serve them. Some reporters labeled Mr. Slater a "working-class" hero. He acquired fans, some of whom started a Facebook page in his honor. On August 12, 2010, over 140,000 people had registered as "liking" this page. Mr. Slater was arraigned on August 10 and charged with criminal mischief, reckless endangerment and trespassing. He pled not guilty.

After the initial reports, additional information found its way into the media. Passengers from the flight told reporters that Mr. Slater started the conflict by swearing at a female passenger. Another passenger stated that Mr. Slater was rude from the minute she stepped on the plane. She also reported that he spent most of the flight slamming bins and refrigerator doors. A third passenger indicated that Slater was acting "a little strange" throughout the flight. Some reports stated that investigators did not believe that the rude passenger existed, and that Slater came on board the aircraft already supporting his gash.

Media reports also focused on JetBlue. Law enforcement officials were stalled in their investigation by what they believed was lack of cooperation from JetBlue. Aviation officials were delayed in receiving the flight manifest as well as videotapes. JetBlue claimed it was cooperating.

Prior to Mr. Slater's September 7 court date, rumors suggested Mr. Slater was seeking a plea bargain as well as reinstatement in his job at JetBlue. On September 5, the media reported that Mr. Slater no longer worked for JetBlue. However, the airline did not provide details. On September 7, news reports indicated that Mr. Slater will be evaluated by a psychologist as part of a plea deal negotiation. Mr. Slater, according to the District Attorney, made the request for evaluation. The case was adjourned until October 19. Mr. Slater's Facebook fan page at this time had over 209,000 members.