



Boeing whistleblower's mom lays blame for son's death, deemed apparent suicide, in new interview

Description

US : The mother of Boeing whistleblower John Barnett, whom police found dead in his truck earlier this month after he had missed a deposition in connection with his lawsuit against the jet manufacturer, is putting some of the blame on the aerospace giant as police continue to investigate his apparent suicide.

Barnett was suing Boeing, claiming that he had been retaliated against, harassed and spied on by the company, and he failed to show up for his second day of depositions earlier this month.

His lawyers started making calls, and hotel workers found him dead in the parking lot.

"If this hadn't gone on so long, I'd still have my son, my sons would have their brother, and we wouldn't be sitting here," Vicky Stokes told CBS News.

His brother, Rodney Barnett, said in the same interview that the former Boeing quality control engineer wasn't the type to back down and continued to voice his concerns at meetings despite the allegedly hostile work environment.

His persistence is part of what makes the coroner's preliminary assessment that his death was an apparent suicide concerning, according to his lawyers and family members.

One of Barnett's lawyers, Robert Turkewitz, told "Jesse Watters Primetime" earlier this week that he didn't think the aerospace giant had played a role in his client's death – however, he added that "it just didn't make sense" that he would kill himself.

Police are still investigating.

"We're just waiting for the police department and the coroner to release a report on what

they think happened,” Turkewitz said.

A friend of Barnett’s claimed in an interview with local media that he had told her, “If anything happens to me, it’s not suicide.”

“Detectives are actively investigating this case and are awaiting the formal cause of death, along with any additional findings that might shed further light on the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr. Barnett,” Charleston police previously told Fox News Digital.

This past January, Barnett told TMZ that he was concerned that Boeing was returning its 737 Max 9 jets to the sky too quickly, after the incident in which an Alaska Airlines jet’s door panel blew off mid-flight.

Unrelated to Barnett’s retaliation lawsuit, Boeing has struggled with safety concerns about its 737 Max airplanes in recent weeks. CEO Dave Calhoun announced that he would step down at the end of the year.

Other executives, including the head of the 737 Max program, and board members are also leaving the company amid the fallout.

Barnett worked for Boeing for over three decades before retiring in 2017 as a quality-control engineer. In 2019, he told the BBC that Boeing would rush to get its 787 Dreamliner jets off the production line, compromising safety.

He alleged that the emergency oxygen systems on the jets had a failure rate of 25%. This meant that a quarter of 787 Dreamliners had the potential to rapidly lose oxygen if the cabins were suddenly decompressed, suffocating passengers.

Barnett said he had learned of the issue while working at Boeing’s North Charleston plant in 2010 and claimed to have raised the issue with management, but to no avail.

Instead of tackling the issue, his lawyers allege, the company retaliated against him and subjected him to a hostile work environment, leading to the lawsuit for which he was being deposed.

The Federal Aviation Administration reviewed Boeing in 2017, corroborated some of Barnett’s allegations and ordered the company to take action.

In a statement, Boeing told FOX Business, “We are saddened by Mr. Barnett’s passing, and our thoughts are with his family and friends.”

By Michael Ruiz

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