

A TALE OF TWO AIRLINE HEROES

You've heard about Steven Slater.

He's the Jet Blue flight attendant who got fed up, bitched out a nasty passenger over the flight intercom, grabbed two beers, then escaped via the emergency slide (the YouTube is the Taiwanese animation dedicated to his meltdown).

And he's become the latest hero to those who are fed up with their lack of dignity on the job – or the equally large number of people who are fed up with the lack of dignity when flying.

I don't blame people for empathizing with Slater (though I do confess to having gotten into a cursefest with a flight attendant who tried to check my bag – one of the first on the plane – because her own was taking up an entire overhead bin).

But I do find it telling given last year's airline hero: Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, the pilot who saved 155 passengers by successfully landing a US Airways jet in the Hudson river (note, BorowitzReport is the first person I saw make this comparison). I made the point then that the success of the landing and evacuation likely had something to do with the fact that the all-union crew and (with the exception of the Coast Guard) first responders had had years of safety training largely won through organizing.

This year's airline hero, by contrast, works for an airline that has avoided unions.

Mind you, I'm not crazy enough to believe that flight attendants on any of America's crappy unionized airlines have much more dignity at work, particularly in the face of crabby passengers. And the indignity of flying is pretty much universal in this country.

But it will be interesting to see what happens

with Slater (who has not yet been fired from his job).

And more generally, it is a telling statement about where we are headed as a country when last year's dramatic plane landing has been replaced by the deployment of the emergency chute by one disgruntled employee.