

COMMISSION SENSITIVE

MFR 04017218

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

(R)

Event: [redacted] UAL "Star-Fix" operator, San Francisco, CA

Type: Interview (conference call)

Prepared by: Lisa Sullivan

Special Access Issues: None

Teams: 7 and 8

Date: November 21, 2003

Participants (non-Commission): John Midgett, Jeff Ellis, Mike Feagley, and [redacted]

Participants (Commission): Sam Brinkley, John Raidt, Miles Kara, Lisa Sullivan and Bill Johnstone

Location: UAL SOC Chicago, IL

**Background**

[U] [redacted] began working as a Star-Fix operator for United Airlines in the San Francisco Systems Aircraft Maintenance Center (SAMC) less than two weeks before 9-11. Previously, he had been an aviation mechanic. Star fix operators were trained to provide answers about maintenance of equipment and were contacted primarily by flight attendants. Flight attendants could call them on speed-dial from phones in the plane when they encountered technical or mechanical difficulties.

[U] As a point of clarification, [redacted] explained that the "SAMC" division had operators that handled more complicated mechanical problems encountered by the airplane pilots.

[U] As standard procedure, when he received a call he would say, "good morning - star fix." The person on the other line would identify themselves and also the aircraft number. That information allowed him to pull up information on his computer screen about what type of plane he was talking to; then he would ask the flight attendant what the problem was.

**Flight 175**

[U] On the morning of 9-11, he was still in training. He came in for the day shift shortly before 6:00 a.m. (Pacific Time). Marc Policastro was in the main room of the office coming off the night shift and was talking about how the night went. It was at that point

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Policastro got the call from UAL 175. [redacted] could tell from his computer screen that the call was from a flight attendant and at first it appeared to be a normal call. Policastro just listened to the caller and didn't say anything. Then he took his headset off and said, "That flight was hijacked." [redacted] asked him if it was a joke but Policastro said, "No, it's for real." The two of them walked over to the desk of the supervisor and spoke to the manager on duty, who quickly got on the phone to someone.

[U] At that point the TV monitors were turned on to CNN and the first aircraft had already hit the World Trade Center. [redacted] recalled that the threat then became "true and apparent" to him. [redacted] impression was that the call received by Policastro from the flight attendant on UAL 175 was very short. He was not able to really say anything to her. It was like good morning and then he was taking his headset off.

**Flight 93**

[U] [redacted] then walked back to his position at the star fix desk from the manager's desk in shock. He said he probably took two or three subsequent calls that were normal, routine maintenance issues. None of the calls reported anything unusual. The third or fourth call he received was from a female flight attendant on UAL 93. He does not remember if she identified herself. He could hear the apprehension in her voice but he was impressed with how professionally she carried herself on the phone. She was not hysterical by any means. She reported to [redacted] that the plane was being hijacked. To the best of his recollection, she told him the hijackers where in the cabin and the flight deck. He told her, "I am aware of your situation." She responded: "How do you know?" He did not tell her about UAL 175 or the other hijackings from that day.

[U] [redacted] said that he knew at the time his call was from a different plane than Policastro's caller.

[U] [redacted] thinks the call he received from Flight 93 took place before the second aircraft hit. His notes weren't that detailed. His notes with the flight number and the aircraft number ended up in the trash somewhere and he reported that he hasn't spoken to anyone about this since 9-11.

[U] [redacted] reported that on the computer screen for Star Fix operators, you can see what every single person in the room is doing (via icons). In training, he learned that in the event of a crisis (such as if a flight attendant calls to report the cabin is filling up with smoke), the best thing to do is get the manager on the phone. In addition, anyone can pick up a headset and listen to a call that is going on in that room.

[U] [redacted] told the flight attendant on UAL 93 to stay on the line as long as she could as he tried to transfer the call, but he could tell from the computer monitor that the manager was on another call. [redacted] got the attention of the co-workers right around him. A supervisor/manager then came over to his desk and took over the call with the flight attendant from UAL 93. He never heard from or talked to the flight again.

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[U] [redacted] recalled that his portion of the call lasted a minute or two before he handed the phone off to the supervisor. He listened in for part of the call once the supervisor took over. After that, United management personnel separated him and Policastro from the other staff members until the crisis was over and told them not to speak to anyone. [redacted] prepared his written statement about the call at this time.

[U] [redacted] reported that [redacted] is a Star-Fix mechanic. He had the same position as Policastro and himself. [redacted] was not aware of any calls from the hijacked planes other than the two received by Policastro and himself. He was not aware of [redacted] involvement in any such calls, but he recalled that the schedule indicated that [redacted] was present at the time and could have listened in.

[U] In the short time [redacted] was on the phone with the flight attendant, he did not hear any information about guns or knives. He did not ask the ethnic background of the hijackers and he had nothing else to report to the Commission regarding his recollection of the UAL hijackings.

9/11 Working-level Employee