

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: American Airlines Systems Operation Center (SOC) personnel

Type: Interview by Conference call

Date: April 26, 2004

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Lisa Sullivan

Teams: 7 and 8

Participants (non-Commission): Ray Howland, AAL SOC; Craig Parfitt, AAL SOC; Bill Halleck, AAL SOC; Craig Marquis, AAL SOC; Doug Cotton, counsel for AAL; and Chris Christensen, counsel for Condon and Forsyth, LLP

Participants (Commission): Lisa Sullivan, Bill Johnstone, and Miles Kara

Location: by conference call from the 9-11 Commission's conference room at the GSA office

**Technical and Communications Equipment**

[U] SOC personnel verified that they use ASD (Aircraft Situational Display) instead of the Traffic Situational Display (TSD) program used by air traffic controllers. The programs are virtually the same and serve the same purpose; however the TSD is more "tactical" with "more information".

[U] Bill Halleck was aware the Air Traffic Control (ATC) system had started a primary track on a target they believed was AAL 11. He did not recall that the track was called "AAL 11 Alpha." Commission staff informed him that the track, "AAL 11 Alpha" continued south on the TSD after the time of impact. Halleck was not aware of that, either.

[U] SOC personnel were not aware that AAL 11 was a "hollow target" as seen on the TSD.

[U] SOC personnel explained that "selcall" refers to "Selective Calling" which means a dispatcher can selectively call, via radio, a particular cockpit. A chime rings in the cockpit to notify the pilot of the call. This is another form of voice communications between the company dispatcher and the pilot. The four-digit code to dial a plane is programmed into the flight plane and would be known to every dispatcher. It is also filed with ATC.

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[U] Dispatchers also send ACARS messages ("text messages") that appear on the center console in the cockpit. The SOC personnel have never heard of ATC sending ACARS messages or "selcalls" to planes. As far as they are aware, only dispatchers have those capabilities.

**Communications and Notifications on AAL 11**

[U] AAL SOC personnel said they did not receive a request from the Herndon ATC command center on 9/11 to notify their planes to beware of cockpit intrusions. That call would have come through the ATC desk. If it had been received from Herndon or from an ATC inflight center, the SOC personnel believe they would have carried out that request.

[U] Craig Marquis received the call from reservations operator Nydia Gonzalez, who had the flight attendant aboard AAL 11 on the phone. He knew conclusively a hijack was underway when it was confirmed the hijackers were in the cockpit.

[U] Peggy Houck, the dispatcher for AAL 11, was told by Craig Marquis to "contain and control information" about the hijacking, as it was underway.

[U] At approximately 8:30 AM EDT, Craig Marquis asked Bill Halleck to check with Boston Air Traffic Control Center to see if they were having a problem with one of the flights. At that approximate time, Bill Halleck talked to Boston Center TMU. The controller told him they weren't in communication with the plane; they had lost transponder signal; they had heard threatening sounds over the frequency; and the aircraft had deviated from its flight path.

[U] Halleck said he was the first person at AAL to speak to FAA ATC personnel.

[U] Parfitt reported that the AAL System Operations Command Center (SOCC), which he managed on 9/11 and which was primarily responsible for dealing with the emergency, received all of its information that day on the individual flights from the SOC, not the ATC. Marquis reported further that all of his communication with ATC on 9/11 was through Bill Halleck.

[U] Craig Marquis locked out the flight manifest for Flight 11. This meant only certain people within the company could access the information for the flights. ATC never has access to flight manifests.

[U] The American SOC personnel indicated that when the Boston ATC Center reported they had put a primary track on AAL 11, they gave it an airport identification and the altitude of 2-9-0.

[U] Marquis said it was clear the plane was descending because the flight attendant on the telephone told him and Nydia Gonzalez that they were. Also, the accelerated speed indicated the plane was losing altitude.

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[U] Commission staff indicated that the military can determine the altitude of a primary target, but Marquis reported that no one from the AAL SOC called any military entity that day.

[U] Ray Howland was confident the plane that hit the first tower was AAL 11 because he got a call from Chuck Easton at LaGuardia at 8:50 or 8:55 EDT that a plane had hit the tower. He put one and one together.

[U] Marquis indicated that after he became aware that #11 had impacted, he knew that it wasn't a traditional hijacking because he knew that no American pilot would fly into the World Trade Center (WTC) under any circumstances.

**Communications and Notifications on AAL 77**

[U] ATC queried the AAL SOC at 9:00 AM EDT to try and raise AAL 77. Howland said he learned at 9:00 AM that a second plane was missing in the system. This was AAL's first awareness that multiple hijackings had occurred on 9/11,

[U] Halleck confirmed that he called Herndon just after the second plane went into the second tower. He spoke to Ellen King at Command Center. At that point, they hadn't identified that AAL 11 was the first plane that flew into the World Trade Center.

[U] Halleck found out from Command Center that AAL 77 was missing when they said they were looking for AAL 77 as well as AAL 11. When talking to Ellen King, he thought both hijacked planes could have been American Airlines' because they were looking for AAL 77 as well. She told him they had a "different number" for the second plane that hit the second tower.

[U] Halleck does not know what time it was when they realized that AAL 77 was missing.

[U] The AAL SOC personnel indicated that they thought the second aircraft to hit the WTC was #77 because: a) they were not yet aware that United was "missing" a plane, and b) the Pentagon had not yet been hit.

[U] The AAL SOC personnel reported that there was no management decision made to notify their pilots to beware cockpit intrusions. They indicated that they were in a state of great confusion with a large amount of conflicting information and they were focused on getting their planes safely landed as soon as possible.

[U] The SOC personnel stated that the track on AAL 77 continued to head west on the ASD after known impact time at the Pentagon.