

MFR 04016228
ATA

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Review of investigation conducted by the FBI of Atta's suitcases at Boston, MA

Date: February 10, 2004

Special Access Issues: none

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Team Number: Front Office and Team 1A

On 09/11/2001, Mohammed Atta boarded US Airways Express Flight 5930 at the Jetport, Portland, ME. Atta check two suitcases, a brand name Travelpro pull-along suitcase, black in color and a brand name Travel Gear suitcase, green in color. Investigation determined that the Travel Gear suitcase belonged to Abdul Aziz al Omari. The Travelpro suitcase had US Airways baggage ticket LAX US138529 and the Travel Gear suitcase had US Airways baggage ticket LAX US 138530. The tickets were attached to the suitcases, and recorded electronically in the database of US Airways and American Airlines. Both suitcases were check through to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). The suitcases were to be transferred to American Airlines (AA) Flight 11, departing Logan International Airport (BOS) for LAX. US Airways flight 5930 departed from the Jetport, Portland, ME at 6:00 am and arrived at Logan International Airport at 7:00 am. AA Flight 11 departed from Logan Airport at 7:45 am. The reference for this information is FBI report form (FD-302) interview of [redacted] American Airlines passenger agent, and the passenger name record for Atta, maintained by American Airlines (265-A-NY-280350-302-19106).

Prior to departure, AA Flight 11, a Boeing 767 was serviced under the supervision of [redacted]. A FBI report of interview is the source for this information (302-7431). [redacted] is a ramp service manager for American Airlines at Logan International Airport. He is responsible for the cleaning, fueling and baggage loading of American Airlines aircraft. On 09/11/2001 he supervised the cleaning, refueling and baggage loading of AA Flight 11. AA Flight 11 was an aircraft that arrived from San Francisco, CA at 6:00 am, and therefore was described as a "turn-around flight." Mr. [redacted] stated that at 7:30 [redacted] the crew chief for Flight 11 received a call from a passenger service representative, stating that a passenger had just boarded Flight 11, and the passenger service representative wanted to determine if the passenger's two suitcases had arrived from US Airways. [redacted] told the passenger service representative, also known as a gate agent, that the suitcases had arrived, but would not be put on Flight 11, because the baggage compartment had already been locked for departure. [redacted] noted that it was unusual for the passenger service representative to call the ramp crew, unless the affected passenger has asked about the baggage.

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9/11 Personal Privacy

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The suitcases were then given to [redacted] the baggage expediter for American Airlines at Logan International Airport. There is a FBI report of interview for [redacted] (302-46163). [redacted] placed new tags on the suitcases and placed them on a baggage belt to be loaded on to AA Flight 181. After the crash of Flight 11 was reported, [redacted] examined the two suitcases. He stated that the tags on the two suitcases had a covert marking that indicated that the suitcases belonged to a passenger, "that was a security issue." [redacted] called [redacted] the senior ramp supervisor for American Airlines, and told him that what he had determined. [redacted] has a FBI report of interview (302-440). [redacted] examined the luggage and directed [redacted] to open the suitcases.

When the suitcases were opened, [redacted] found a Koran, tapes on flying Boeing aircraft, a large folding knife, a pad with flight planning data, and an instrument for calculating the weight on an aircraft. [redacted] contacted the Massachusetts State Police (MSP). Sergeant Studley arrived at the baggage office and took custody of the two suitcases.

The two suitcases were searched by FBI agents at the offices of Troop "F" of the MSP at Logan International Airport. The following items of interest were recovered from Atta's Travelpro suitcase:

- Four page letter in Arabic
- Electronic flight computer with case
- Islamic Finder Prayer Schedule
- Simulator Check-ride procedures
- Flight planner sheets attached to cardboard
- Videotape of flight procedures for a Boeing 747-4000
- Videotape of flight procedures for a Boeing 757-200
- Plastic device for determining the affect of an aircraft's weight on range
- Folding knife
- Brand name "First Defense" Cayenne (red pepper) spray

The following items of interest were recovered from al-Omari's Travelgear suitcase:

- Three English grammar books
- Arabic to English dictionary
- Perfume bottle
- Brand name Brylcream anti-dandruff hair dressing
- Saudi passport for al-Omari
- Hudson United Bank check book for al-Omari
- Three photographs
- Handkerchief
- Twenty dollar bill, US Currency
(302-1306)

It is presently unresolved if the two identified gate agents for American Airlines, [redacted] called the ramp personnel servicing Flight 11 and asked if Atta's suitcases had been placed on to the flight. This could be accomplished with follow-up interviews of the two gate agents. Additionally, the American Airlines crew chief, [redacted] should be interviewed concerning his conversation with "passenger service representatives" about Atta's luggage.

There are two issues for the Commission to consider. First, is whether Atta intended his luggage be discovered and searched? Based on what is reported as having occurred, this is unlikely. The search of Atta's Travelpro suitcase provided early information about the nature of the Islamist threat, the probable links to al Qaeda, and the techniques used in the hijacking of the aircraft. Atta was concerned enough about whether his luggage had been switched from US Airways Flight 5930 to American Airlines Flight 11 that he made a last minute request to the gate agent about the suitcases. It is conclusive, that Atta did not want his suitcase to be discovered and searched.

The second issue is the identification of Atta as a "security issue." The two suitcases had a covert tag from US Airways to warn that Atta and his luggage were a security issue. When a last minute inquiry was made, apparently on the behalf of Atta, about the status of his suitcases, no one at American Airlines thought to search the luggage. After the terrorist attacks this would become standard procedure. It is unclear now what was the American Airlines' policy or the Federal Aviation Administration's policy pre-09/11/2001, for the search of luggage that may pose a threat, or be evidence of criminal activity.