

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Interview of FBI Supervisory Special Agents Kevin Kline and John Turkington

Type of event: Interview

Dates: November 6, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Prepared by: Raj De

Team Number: 1A

Location: FBI, Newark Field Office

Participants – Non-Commission: FBI Supervisory Special Agent Hank Allison

Participants – Commission: Michael Jacobson, Raj De

Kline's first day in the Newark Field Division was September 11, 2001. He had come from Headquarters to take over a drug squad. Turkington is from the Paterson, NJ RA office. He was drafted by Newark on 9/11 and stayed for seven months. Kline and Turkington oversaw the post-9/11 investigation out of the Newark Field Division. [Note: Kline did most of the talking during the interview, and Turkington generally agreed with what he said. Therefore, unless otherwise specifically noted, the information contained herein is attributable primarily to Kline.]

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, investigation out of the Newark Field Division was divided into two main parts: (1) follow-up regarding potential leads, information, and any suspicious activity that may have been related to the 9/11 attacks; and (2) investigation relating to United Airlines Flight #93, which had departed from Newark airport on the morning of 9/11.

With respect to the first part of the investigation, there was significant work to be done out of Newark because 15 of the 19 hijackers had some association or another with New Jersey. Specifically, several of the 9/11 hijackers had spent considerable time in the area during the summer of 2001. The Newark Field Division prepared timelines for each of those hijackers who had lived in the area, collecting residential, communications, and financial information for these individuals. These timelines were subsequently forwarded to the Penttbom team in Washington, DC.

The goal of this part of the investigation was to determine if any individuals in the area were associated with the 9/11 hijackers. Several of the hijackers had been part of the local community, but nobody with whom they came into contact in the area was a part of

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the conspiracy. In fact, no "cooperators" have provided any contrary information to either the U.S. or foreign governments (an apparent reference to detainees).

Everything that was developed was sent to the Penttbom team in Washinton, DC. Although no co-conspirators were found, any subjects who may have associated with the 9/11 hijackers or their associates in the area were either deported or arrested on criminal charges if possible. Every lead was run down. Initially over 1000 agents were involved. Ultimately about 750 agents were divided into investigation teams. These teams looked into the finances, communications, and general background of each subject that emerged during the investigation.

The second part of the investigation out of the Newark Field Division concerned United Airlines Flight #93, which had departed Newark Airport at 8:42 am on September 11, 2001. Newark prepared timelines and charts relating to every phone call made that morning. The FBI, after all, had to establish that the flight was in fact hijacked and did not just crash as a result of mechanical failure. Agents from the Newark Field Division worked extensively with victims' families as well. For instance, in April 2002, Newark conducted a review of the flight recorder from Flight #93 with the families.

A number of the subjects that emerged from the 25,000 + leads that were run out of Newark had extremely strong associations with several of the 9/11 hijackers. The two individuals that particularly stand out are Eyad Rababah and [REDACTED]. Although these individuals may have supported some of the 9/11 hijackers, they had no knowledge of the conspiracy. Another example is [REDACTED]. The hijackers got their newspapers and groceries from his store nearly every day when they lived in the area - agents viewed every video security tape from the store - but there is nothing more to indicate his witting assistance.

The Newark Field Division did a lot of work relating to Zacarias Moussaoui as well. Agents in Newark conducted telephone investigation and analysis until this work was transferred to headquarters. Information developed by the Newark Field Division was ultimately used in the Moussaoui indictment.

Every lead related to the 9/11 attacks was followed through. No leads remain. Most leads have been explained. No investigation of any subjects related to the 9/11 attacks (including those on our list) is still open. Most subjects who arose during the investigation were either incarcerated or deported. Newark looked for a network that may have assisted the hijackers. Paterson is a close-knit Arab community. The 9/11 hijackers took advantage of this close-knit community.

Kline and Turkington have never been prouder of the FBI than since 9/11. Today, a lot of counter-terrorism work is conducted out of Newark. For example, the Newark Field Division is involved with the Danny Pearl murder investigation and the Lakhani (attempted stinger missile sale) case.

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The first two weeks after the 9/11 attacks were very reactive in view of the large volume of information and leads that needed to be processed. For example, by the night of 9/11, agents had gone through the dumpsters at the hotels where the 9/11 hijackers had stayed. After that initial two week period, the agents were able to specialize by focusing on specific investigations. This latter process was referred to internally as the "adopt a terrorist" program because individual agents canvassed everything about specific subjects that arose during the course of the investigation. To confirm, no individuals connected to the 9/11 attacks remain under open investigation out of Newark.

Initially, investigation of all individual subjects even potentially related to 9/11 was conducted under Penttbom. Some of the investigations were eventually broken out into separate cases if warranted (particularly when the investigation did not relate directly to any of the 19 hijackers). The investigation of [redacted] for one example, was separated. The Penttbom team did not allow Newark to adopt a "macro view". That role was reserved for the "almighty" Penttbom team. Penttbom retained control over the big picture. In fact, at one point the Penttbom team demanded that all 9/11 leads be passed by them. In practice, this was simply unworkable.

In addition to the subjects on the list provided to the Newark Field Division, there are three individuals that Kline believes were also of some significance during the initial investigation. The first was [redacted] stayed on the same floor as the 9/11 hijackers at the Marriott prior to the attacks. He was also captured on the security video from the hotel lobby (during the same time frame, but not with the hijackers). He flew to New Jersey from Florida, and there was some thought that he might be identifiable with a [redacted] a subject of San Diego investigation. Post 9/11, [redacted] was taken into custody "overseas." He is Australian. He was determined not to have been connected to the 9/11 attacks. Kline was not sure, but did not believe he was identifiable with the [redacted] from San Diego. SA [redacted] was involved with this investigation.

The second and third subjects of interest who were not on our list are Mohammed Asmuth and Ayub Ali Khan, the two individuals pulled off a train headed toward Texas the day after 9/11 with box cutters in their possession. Although any connection between these individuals and the 9/11 attacks ultimately washed out, they were both charged with credit card fraud.

The investigation of Mohammed el-Atriss was blown way out of proportion. The 9/11 hijackers did not get *fake* IDs from Atriss. Rather, the 9/11 hijackers used their real names to obtain valid international drivers' licenses, which is what Atriss did for a living. Atriss was very cooperative.

Of all the subjects investigated, Kline and Turkington unequivocally stated that none of them had any foreknowledge of the conspiracy. Rababah and [redacted] the two most significant subjects, were all about money not extremism. Admittedly, their contact with the hijackers was "very strange." However, the 9/11 conspiracy was a very "simple plan."

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The Montclair and Union Street apartments pop up over and over because they are common places to stay for recent immigrants in the Paterson area community. The Islamic Center of Passaic County is a politically active religious center. Mezain was the former imam there. The mosque is radical, but nobody at the mosque overtly supported the hijackers.

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