

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Visit to B757 aircraft and orientation by United Airlines Chief Pilot, Bob Jordan and

Type: Short briefing and access by commission staff to a B757 aircraft

Date: November 20, 2003

Special Access Issues: None

Team: 7 and 8

Prepared by: John Raidt¹

Location: United Airlines facilities at O'Hare Airport

Participants (non-Commission): Capt. Bob Jordan, United Airlines Chief Pilot; Dennis Taylor, United Airlines Asst. Chief Pilot; Jeff Ellis (outside counsel to United Airlines); Ed Feagley (outside Counsel to United Airlines).

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

Background

[U] Capt. Jordan and Capt. Taylor provided a tour and briefing aboard a Boeing 757 (aircraft servicing UA Flight 93 and AA Flight 77 on 9/11).

Take-Off procedures

[U] Two minutes before take-off the flight attendants prepare for take-off and are seated. The flight attendants stay seated for about 5 minutes or until the aircraft reaches 10,000 to 15,000 feet, and then use their best judgment about when to get up and begin cabin service. It is the Captain's discretion on when to turn off the seat belt sign. Capt. Taylor said he does this around 23,000 feet on most flights and at a higher altitude for longer flights—about 30,000 feet. This is usually about 15 or 20 minutes into the flight.

Use of StarFix

[U] The Flight crew knows to contact StarFix, which is United Airline's maintenance facility in San Francisco, when there is a maintenance problem on the aircraft, such as a broken seat. Capt. Jordan and Capt. Taylor were not aware of any training received by flight attendants about what they should do if they are unable to contact the cockpit.

Cockpit Keys

9/11 Closed by Statute

Navigation by hijackers

[U] Neither Capt. Jordan nor Capt. Taylor knew exactly how the hijackers navigated their planes because there were several ways to do it. Capt. Taylor said that inputting latitude and longitude coordinates into the Flight Management Computer isn't commonly done, but FMC software varies.

Layout

[U] Commission staff primarily wanted to get on the aircraft to examine the layout and identify the seats occupied by the hijackers to get a sense of the operation. The 757 is a single-aisle aircraft. The 767 is a double-aisled aircraft. The 757 has a large cockpit. The door swings in and you step up into the cockpit.

¹The Commission staffer originally assigned to write the MFR for this briefing, team leader Sam Brinkley, did not do so. Because the decision was made by Commission staff not to record this briefing, the MFR was rendered solely from participant notes several months after the event. The MFR has been written as faithfully as possible according to the notes; however, any key information derived from the MFR for use in reporting should be confirmed first.