



MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) New York Air Route Center (ZNY)

Type of event: Follow-up Interview with Mike McCormick

Date: Monday, December 15, 2003

Special Access Issues: ID Check

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Team Number: 8

Location: Ronkonkoma, New York

Participants - Non-Commission: Mary M. McCarthy (Office of Regional Counsel,
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Participants - Commission: John Azzarello, Miles Kara, Geoffrey Brown

Note: Please refer to the interview recording for further details.

Background:

McCormick is now Chief of Staff Eastern Region Air Traffic Division. He was promoted to that position on October 21st, 2003.

On September 11, 2001 (9/11) McCormick was the Facility Manager for New York Center (ZNY).

Lines of Communication on 9/11:

McCormick noted regarding the Air Traffic Telecon that it was the same telecom as the Dave Cannoles telecom, which is the FAA Headquarters Telecom. McCormick noted that only himself and Dave Cannoles stayed on that telecom for the initial period. Others joined that line periodically as the day progressed. McCormick does not remember that ZBW or N90 was on that conference call. He does not believe Bob Birch from N90 was on that call either.

Regarding the information flow to Herndon Command Center, McCormick believes Supervisor Traffic Management Coordinators (STMCs) on duty (Mulligan and Rosenberg), Traffic Management Coordinator (TMC) Jim Kurz, TMC Pete McCloskey, and Operations Manager in Charge (OMIC) Bruce Barrett were all giving information to Herndon Command Center. McCormick recalled there was another TMC on duty, but does not remember who that was.

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McCormick noted that in the case of a large scale air event there was no specific protocol as to which person was in charge of communicating information since the protocol was for the OMIC to dictate those responsibilities. McCormick does not believe anyone gave information to Washington Air Traffic Headquarters before he was speaking to Dave Cannoles. McCormick noted that he had an adjunct form of communication that informed his superiors at the region.

- 1) ZNY to Herndon. Herndon to FAA Headquarters;
- 2) Any field facility to Regional Operations Center to Washington Operations Center to all eastern region facilities and offices;
- 3) McCormick to his superiors at Air Traffic in the Region;
- 4) McCormick to Cannoles later in the day. [Commission staff is investigating the time frame and nature of this Cannoles conference call, and how it differed from the Eastern Region's Air Traffic Telecom.]

One communication would be specifically through the Air Traffic line of business and the other would be through the regional offices which expand the information to all necessary parties.

At the Region, McCormick spoke with Ed McKenna, the manager of Syracuse Tower, who was in the regional offices for a meeting that McCormick was supposed to attend later in the day. McCormick noted that his conversation with McKenna evolved after several frustrated calls to the Air Traffic Division to inform them of the situation regarding AA 11 and UAL 175.

This took place after 9:03 AM. He was on the conference call with Cannoles around 9:15 AM. It was during this interim period that McCormick spoke with McKenna. McKenna was delegated the responsibility to call McCormick back. McCormick had been attempting to contact Franklin Hatfield, Regional Air Traffic Manager, the highest ranking eastern region air traffic representative, or Rick DuCharme, the Assistant Regional Air Traffic Manager, or any of the various branch managers with authority below that. Some of those would be John McCartney, Operations Branch Manager, Dave Siewert, the Resource Management Branch Manager, Mike Sammartino, the Air Space Branch Manager, Mike Catrozulo, the Requirements Branch Manager, Ron Ruggeri, the Manager of Quality Assurance Staff, and Mary Ellen Grant, the Information Resource Management Branch Manager. It was Ron Ruggeri who sent McCormick the text page regarding the hijacking situation.

McCormick initially called Cannoles from his portable phone, and when he realized the nature of the telecom, he dialed it from the speaker phone on an unrecorded line in the Air Traffic Manager's conference room.

McCormick has no knowledge of the differences between the conference call he was on with Cannoles and the FAA Tactical Net, the FAA Primary Net, or other FAA nets.

McCormick's telecom with Cannoles lasted for many weeks as an open line, and

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at certain points there were other agencies on the line. He does not know if these other agencies were on the line on 9/11 or on another day. He does recall there being Air Traffic, Airways Facilities, and other FAA entities participating in the call.

McCormick noted that others at the region most likely participated in some telecons. He referred to Marcus Aurora, who works for TSA now, and who was Division Manager for Security in the Eastern Region on 9/11, according to McCormick. Frank Shurott was an agent who works for Aurora. He retired two months ago. He worked in employee investigations and security clearances. Joy Criem was working in security as well.

Initially McCormick became aware that there was a problem with United Airlines Flight 175 (UAL 175) when he was speaking to Bob Birch regarding AA 11. McCormick does not know who notified Herndon regarding UAL 175. McCormick did speak to a number of people at the Region regarding both AA 11 and UAL 175. McCormick stated that Bruce Barrett was communicating the situation along the appropriate air traffic channels.

McCormick noted that he delegated a presence at the telecom throughout the period of its duration. Dave LaCates, Laurie Weber, Paul Fairley, and Kevin Delaney all held this responsibility. The same group was responsible for monitoring the Eastern Region Telecom.

McCormick received information regarding the Sikorski Helicopter through a ZNY staff member, who heard this information through N90.

Phantom AA 11: McCormick did not know where any information regarding AA 11 being airborne after 8:46 AM may have originated. Either Dulles or Washington National reported that quick moving plane headed towards the White House. He had already assumed that the target for AA 77 was Washington, DC. He mentioned that to Cannoles on the telecom. When they reported the fast moving VFR target, that flowed into his suspicions on AA 77. No one said this on the line though. There were reports that indicated they thought AA 77 was headed east from Indy Center. McCormick asked Cannoles if he was going to "be okay", and Cannoles made a joke "Don't worry, we have the blinds down." McCormick guesses that the report of AA 77 heading east came out of Indy Center, but is not sure. McCormick noted that if the Command Center speaks with Dulles it would be to a TMC at Dulles.

Commission staff presented McCormick with a timeline that was produced through ZNY. Kevin Delaney was this timeline's primary compiler and editor. McCormick believes STMCs and OMICs contributed to the timeline. McCormick noted that they attempted to validate the information presented in the timeline with the time stamps and information from the tapes at ZNY.

Commission staff gave McCormick some hand written notes to identify the authors of, and he noted that some of the notes reflect the days and weeks after 9/11, not just the day of 9/11. McCormick noted that one of the documents Commission staff showed him

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related to an expired ID Card of a former contractor for a FAA ZNY employee that was discovered in an apartment raid in New York City.

McCormick noted that there were two reports out of Poughkeepsie. They received initial reports from the New York Tracon that either a twin engine aircraft or Sikorski helicopter was lost. This was happening when AA 11 hit and UAL 175 was being hijacked. This all happened simultaneously. This reinforced initial reports that there was an ELT before AA 11 struck the WTC. Initially when McCormick was on the telecom it was unknown if there were other aircraft that struck the WTC. McCormick believes he had a conversation with Cannoles on the telecom relating UAL 175 as being one of the aircraft that may have hit the WTC. They had some conversations regarding the known and unknowns. They knew that UAL 175, a Boeing 767, had hit the south tower definitively. The initial news reports for the North Tower were that a small aircraft had hit it. Up until UAL 175 hit the south Tower McCormick had thought it would hit the North Tower. McCormick was sure that AA 11 had hit the north tower, but was not sure if it was the only aircraft to have hit the north tower. He learned about AA 77 from another region that had gotten on the telecom. It was most likely Cleveland Center, Indianapolis Center, Great Lakes Region, Eastern Region Air Traffic, Washington Tower, or Washington Headquarters speaking about a lost aircraft. They reported that they had lost all information, but gave a last known position and altitude. "Somebody", possibly Dulles Tower, got on the telecom and said they had a fast moving VFR that was headed towards the White House. Shortly thereafter he was told the Pentagon had been hit. McCormick had the impression that most of the parties on the telecom were operational and not managerial level.

McCormick recalls that someone did report information regarding UAL 93 on the telecom. He noted that there was no sign in or roll call operating on the telecom.

McCormick clarified transcripts by noting that Tom White, Jim Coshigano and Jim Barth were both employees at N90 on 9/11. White was an Operations Manager, Coshigano was an STMC and Barth was an Operations Manager at the time. McCormick noted though that he does not recall White being at the Tracon on 9/11. He noted there is also a Tom Pasione at the Command Center.

McCormick noted that he does not recall being involved with the Herndon Telecoms. McCormick noted at one point there was 1) the Cannoles Telecom; 2) the Eastern Region Telecom; and 3) the Command Center Telecom. The Command Center Telecom subsequently became the DEN line.

McCormick does not believe that anyone at ZNY had operational knowledge that NEADS had radar feeds that gave altitudes.

McCormick does not recall any discussions over AA 11 not ever passing through ZNY airspace. McCormick noted that they were looking for position reports from other aircraft regarding AA 11. McCormick does recall receiving information when he went to the watch desk to speak with Bruce Barrett to let him know that the hijack was confirmed, Marty Rosenberg said he spoke to American Airlines who informed him that one flight

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attendant was dead and the hijackers had "knives and bombs". He also relayed that American Airlines had spoken to a flight attendant.

ELT: McCormick's best recollection is that it occurred moments before the impact of AA 11. His best hypothesis is that it was unrelated to the event.

McCormick noted that he was fairly certain that there was a command center representative on the command center line. The only question from ZNY on 9/11 was whether or not there was more than one aircraft that hit the north tower. He did hear some speculation, not on the telecom, that perhaps it was not AA 11 that struck the tower. But he did not communicate this. McCormick noted that most at ZNY believed AA 11 had hit the North Tower. He also noted that if one of his employees had heard over the telecom false reports regarding AA 11 they would have voiced their awareness and clarified the point.

McCormick does not remember Terry Biggio or Collin Scoggins being on the Cannoles telecom on 9/11. At that time he does not think he would have recognized their voices.

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