

The Hunt for American Air Eleven after WTC 1 is Hit

*John
good up thru
09/11*

Note: This chronology of events starts prior to AA11 impact. Times noted are FAA-based. Twenty five seconds has been added to any NEADS times used to compensate for an error existing that day, according to both the 84th Radar Evaluation Squadron and the National Traffic Safety Board. Key conversations were recorded at both NEADS and FAA Centers.

0845:38 NEADS Identification Technician (IDT) called New York AMIS (Aviation Management Information System) and spoke with "087" the New York Center Oceanic Display and Planning System, Sector 87. NEADS asked if "087" was aware of the possible hijack of AA11. The person was not. NEADS informed "087" that there is a real world hijack (AA11) forty miles north of JFK headed towards JFK.

0845:47 The Boston Operations Manager in Charge (OMIC) told his NY counterpart that "We're still driving airplanes through it [presumably the path of AA11], he's been slowin down so we don't know if he's gonna descend or not." NY acknowledged, "Right."

0846:28 NEADS IDT asked "087" if there was any location information whatsoever. "087" responded, "I do not, hold on one second." The IDT, off line, was recorded as saying, "New York told me to hold on, you heard that right, hmmm, come on New York."

0846:32 New York radar controller asked Gulfstream 6QS "by any chance you have traffic at twelve o'clock about eight miles heading southwestbound altitude unknown...he should be off at eleven o'clock." The Gulfstream responded, "I'm looking."

0846:47 The Mission Crew Commander Ops Transcript recorded a background voice "Time 12:46, authenticate, Delta, X-Ray, scramble immediately, Panto 45, 46 heading 290, flight level 290."

0846:49 The NY Center Area B Operations Supervisor told the NY Operations Manager in Charge (OMIC), "The Chief's here with me we just flew a guy over at thirty one, he did not verify he [AA11] was at twenty nine." The OMIC acknowledged "did not," and the Operations Supervisor replied, "Did not see him."

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0846:51 American Air Eleven impacted the north tower, according to NTSB-gathered data from the NY TRACON radar.

0847:43 NY "087" told NEADS "Hold on I can get a lat long hold one second."

0847:48 The NEADS MCC reported to someone that "I have scrambled Otis, and already, as per your direction, we're sending them in that general direction, we're send [sic] them right to that "Z" point, and then we can maneuver them, as deemed right."

0847:52 CCEAST (The Herdon ATCSCC East supervisor) told the Boston Center TMU, "Hey this is the Comand Center I've got an 'a l a' program out there on the street twelve west from sixteen hundred and twenty one." [There is no clue as to what this means.]

0848:04 NY "087" told NEADS "OK I'm showing forty thirty nine north and seventy four oh three west."

0848:23 NEADS ID1 stated, "Okay, there it is. That's where she said it was."

0848:54 The MCC Ops Transcript recorded a call from CONR. "Sir this is SGT (garbled). CONR, "The General would like uh do you have radar coverage on this guy?"

0849:01 The Eastern Region Quality Assurance Office called the NY Operations Manager and said he needed to find out "about this American eleven," and stated "I have some information on it where is he coming toward New York airspace." NY responded that "He's already halfway through NY airspace and was southwest of Kennedy now. Quality Assurance the asked which way he was heading and was told, "Its confirmed terrorist best we can tell is south." Quality Assurance acknowledged, "ok, South of Kennedy."

0849:35 NEADS ID1 asked "087" if they could get updates as far as the lat longs "of that aircraft," and was told "actually I'm showing his track in coast right now." ID1 then asked, "tracking coast what does that mean is he

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northbound?" ID1 was told "it means as far as what I'm showing here they've lost track on it let me see if I can find out I'll give you a call back." 0849:13-43 Catarone, acting air traffic division manager New England Region announced he was on. The New York Supervisor Traffic Management Coordinator (STMC) asked if Command Center was also on and was told it was. STMC reported that Boston's getting in touch with Atlantic City but asked if Center had any direct line to the military for this incident. Center responded that the supervisor was going to the CARF unit now. STMC then provided new information, "we lost primary target about twenty west of Kennedy looks like there's an ELT report in that area."

0850:02-22 STMC asked, "anyone copy," and Boston Center replied, "I'm sorry say again please," which STMC did and added that "we're gonna get some Coast Guard activity up there." Boston reported that they also lost the track.

0850:06 NY Radar Controller R56 asked FEDEX 1580 if he saw any aircraft out there in front. He did not.

0850:08 Washington Center Traffic Management called Kennedy Tower and asked, "anything going on out there out the windows." Kennedy Tower responded, "just out of the Trade Center... there's a fire at the World Trade Center." Washington responded, "OK cause we might have a problem up there... American flight... we lost his transponder west of Kennedy and now we're picking up an ELT and you're saying there's a fire at the WTC.

0850:37 **ACI (Office of Civil Aviation Security Intelligence)** came up and said "This is the ACI watch, say again if you lost track of the aircraft over..." Boston responded, "Boston has lost track and on our frequency we had confirmed it was a hijack also on the tapes." STMC NY confirmed, "We've lost the track as well and we got a report of an ELT in the area that the track was in."

0850:40 Wash Center-Kennedy Tower continued. Washington: This guy was tracking Boston to LA and we lost the target completely about ten or fifteen west of Kennedy. Kennedy Tower said they would check it out.

0850:47 Delta 1489 reported to NY Radar Controller R42 that in lower Manhattan it looked like the World Trade Center's on fire, but hard to tell.

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0851:03-53 NY STMC provided the Kennedy Tower report to, "anybody on." Boston and Herndon Center responded and Herndon said "yeah on CNN news, its on the news."

0851:19-45 Washington Traffic Management spoke with Newark Tower. Washington said, "if this guy's bringing it back down around Kennedy right to the city boom you know that's the spot." Newark Tower reported that the WTC was on fire to which Washington responded, "You know what unfortunately we have a feeling that might be an American jet went down into there...we lost the target about fifteen miles west of Kennedy." Newark reported that the WTC looked like an explosion hit it. Washington remarked, "well that's probably what it was then, we're thinking that's what it was, cause we were tracking this guy and we lost him right about there."

0851:43 NY Radar Controller R42 asked United 175 to recycle its transponder and squawk 1470.

0851:47 NEADS ID1 transcript contained a background voice, "Who are you talking to, a plane just hit the World Trade Center."

0852:00 Herndon and NY STMC confirmed it was on the news and STMC said, "OK, I guess there's no further use for New York center."

0852:10 NY Controller R42 attempted to contact UA175 and checked comms with Delta 1489.

0852:02-37 Boston MOS, Scoggins, and NEADS Sgt Powell compared information. Powell informed Boston that Otis, not Atlantic City, scrambled at 0846 and should be airborne any second. MOS asked if they got and height finding on him [AA11], and was told "no, we're looking right now...we don't see anything yet...we have the approximate location where it was, we don't have a mode three."

0852:26 NEADS ID1 asked New York AMIS, "see if they lost altitude on that plane all together" and was told, when informed of the WTC, "you're kidding," "no, like I said I don't work a radar here...you said you lost radar though." At about this time NEADS gave impression that "aircraft that hit the WTC was...not that guy." NY responded, "not that guy."

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0852:41 Boston MOS to NEADS, "no we didn't have a mode 3 either...we lost radar on him about five minutes ago he was eight miles east of JFK so I assume he's probably about twenty miles southeast of JFK now or south, almost due south."

0853:00 New York Operations Manager In Charge and the Air Traffic Manager exchange information that there was a fire at the WTC caused by an aircraft. NY OMIC mentioned the reports of ELTs and that next thing we're hearing about is fire and smoke and it looked like an explosion per Newark Tower.

0853:14 Conversation among controllers, Boston and New York. NY R42 asked "do you see that United one seventy five anywhere...do you see that target there that thirty three twenty one code at thirty three five climbing, don't know who he is but you got the US Air 583 if you need him...we may have a hijack we have some problems over here right now."

0853:18 NEADS MCC, referring to the scramble, "no keep on going with it." "A 737 just hit the WTC and I was just curious, at the same time was that the aircraft the last I knew they had a primary on and the track was not squawking...but it was under duress." "Send them to New York City, still consider go."

0853:26 NY Controller R55 told NY Sector 09 "North of Pottstown about twenty miles code three three two one---you see it" Sector 09 did and was told, "That's a hijacked aircraft it's an American 757." Sector 09 commented that he's going southbound and was told by R55 "we have no idea what he's doing," and RA55 added, "We better watch this guy."

0853:43 The controller conversation continued. NY R42 said "that may be real traffic nobody knows, I can't get a hold of UA175 at all right now and I don't know where he went to."

0853:45 NEADS and Boston Area E Supervisor communicated. NEADS asked if we had a tail number and if anyone was tracking the hijacked American one one, if NY Center was. Area E Supervisor responded "we had a primary target on him, we are trying to follow him as best we can, he is not squawking a beacon code whatsoever."

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0854:00 USA583 reported to NY Controller R42 that he was “getting reports over the radio of a commuter plane hitting the WTC” and asked if that “nordo seven six was still in the air.”

0854:27 NY Controller R55 vectored Delta 2315 to avoid “traffic one o’clock ten miles turning into your face descending out of thirty one, it’s a hijacked aircraft we don’t know what he’s doing.”

0854:29 NEADS MCC summarized: “Until its confirmed it’s gonna be a lot easier to get down to this area if I bring them out like this, rather than through all the crap, until it’s confirmed, do you want me to bring down this way at least.” In background, “work with FAA, just tell them to clear a route.”

0854:41 NEADS MCC summarized: “Okay this is what I got so far, possible news that a 737 hit the WTC, this is real world, an we’re trying to confirm this.” In the background, “Okay continue taking the fighters down to the NYC area, JFK area, best that we can, make sure the FAA clears your route all the way through, just do what we gotta do, just press with it.

0855:06 Delta 2315 told R55 he had traffic in sight and was given permission to maneuver as necessary to avoid it. Delta was asked to verify kind of aircraft and company. R55 then guided Delta 2433, as well who reporting having him in sight. Delta 2315 later reported he did not get a good look but reported a darker paint scheme.

0855:22 NEADS MCC summarized: “All right our last actual reported position, if he didn’t crash into the world trade center is 20 miles south of JFK, so I want you to take them down into this area, hold as needed, whatever altitude they need to go to, for center to make that work, is fine by me, but that’s the area I want them to go and hold, right in that little gap right there.”

NOTE: need to cross check the above three items—they seem out of order.

0856:17 R42 told Delta 2433 “we’re not really sure what’s going with any of these airplanes.

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0856:20 USA Air 542 reported "it looks like a Delta airplane to me, a 757. R55 stated, "we believe it's a hijacked aircraft it looks like a 757 we're trying to find out what the livery is."

0856:23 NEADS MCC: They're still under FAA control, we're never gonna take them." Background. "if you can, hand the fighters over directly to FAA so they can just work with them, coordinate with them the best that you can with that, take them to the area and let them handle the airspace.

0857:04 R42 told Delta 2433 "he's at twenty eight he is eleven o'clock and less than a mile. Delta 2433 responded "he looks like a United 76-200 as far as I can tell."

0857:23 TWA 3 told R55 Its dark paint scheme and if I was guessing I would say United but that would be just a guess.

0857:29 NEAD MCC summarized: "Okay what did they say exactly, about that aircraft that hit the WTC. Okay, Boston just talked to us, he said he didn't want to confirm but they're pretty sure that is, that was the aircraft. Unconfirmed from Boston, they're pretty doggone sure it is him yup."

0857:38 ^{TRACON Dep Center} ~~Washington Traffic Management~~ told Newark Tower, "We were tracking and tracking it then I guess that we had a primary target on it, the target disappeared about fifteen west of Kennedy, started picking up and got reports of ELTs and the next thing we know the WTC's on fire.

0858:28 NY Controller RA55 to NY TRACON "Ten northwest of Robbinsville three three two one code put it in your computer he's a hijack or something we have no idea." NY TRACON confirmed the code.

0858:34 NEADS transcript showed, "Their saying that a civilian aircraft has hit the WTC but they haven't confirmed its American Eleven yet."

0858:23 USA583 told New York controller R42, "I hate to keep burdening you with this stuff but now we're picking up another ELT on twenty one five.

0859:01 ^{Dep Center} ~~Washington~~ continued the conversation with Newark Tower who asked what type airplane it was. ^{TRACON} ~~Washington~~ responded, "I think originally

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it was a 76 however they're saying here that until we get confirmation that was it then technically it's still being hijacked somewhere and it was something else hit the WTC."

0858:34-59:28 NEADS MCC: Background, "they want to know what the mission is, I told them the mission is holding, that's what I passed." More background, "Right now, this is what was coordinated with Center, we got them coming south of Long Island and holding at whatever altitude center wants to put them." The MCC asked, "do we have a mission that we can pass to these guys, what they want to know is what kind of mission do we pass tot hem, hold, you see what I mean." "FAA, as needed, also we are holding them south of JFK for approximately ten miles, at whatever altitude they need, so that's all we can do."

0859:21 USA542 told New York controller, "It was a light colored paint scheme with a dark tail I thought it was a Delta airplane."

0900:24 New York Radar Associate RA55 was called by an unknown who said "No, no where is he." RA55 responded "South of Robbinsville North of Robbinsville Southeast of Solberg he's going down he's out of (unintelligible) I think he's hijack I have no idea what he's doing."

0900:37 New York controller asked NY TRACON Liberty West, "You see that you know about that thirty three twenty one code," and TRACON responded "Yeah, we're watching him."

0900:45 The NY TMU Arrival Director asked NY TRACON, "Hey Joe you see three three two one code just southwest of Newark by about fifteen eighteen twenty miles...fifteen thousand descending." TRACON responded, "looking hold on southwest of Newark by about fifteen twenty."

0900:54 An unknown asked NY Radar Associate RA55 if he had "any idea who that point out was." RA55 responded, "Nope but everybody's on it and its I think It's a hijack of some sort they can't even tell what kind of airplane it is can you point him out to Kennedy approach."

0900:56 NY Operations Manager in Charge: "They're not even picking up the damn phone."

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0901:02 Conversation between NY TRACON and the NY TMU Arrival Director. TRACON was not finding anything and had "somebody who keeps coasting but it looks like he's going into one of the small airports down there." TMU added, "Wait a second no, this guys a big boy---this guys a big boy cause he's leaving some big contrails. Hold on a second I'm trying to bring him up here at you---there he is right there hold on." TRACON picked him up at "just out of ninety five hundred nine thousand now...we're just we just we don't know who he is we're just picking him up now." TMU responded, "Alright heads up man it looks like another one coming in."

0901:40 NY OMIC "They're already flying...Now they think it's this code right here a new code."

0902:06 NY OMIC "They're not even picking up the phone Mike but we do have military aircraft in the air. Felser's there's already a couple of F fifteens up they just want to know who it was so we pointed out the target on the United...rapid descent right toward the city down to below two thousand already."

0902:56 ^{Dep Center} ~~Washington Center~~ asked Newark Tower "look out the windows we're showing another target descending rapidly the same as" Newark broke in and said, "Oh no it just went into another one just crashed into the World Trade Center."

0903:04 ^{Dep Center} ~~Washington Center~~ responded, "Another one." Newark continued, "Oh my God we just oh my God the building it just exploded."

0903:45 NEADS ID1 position background voice "They have a possible second hijack."

0904:14 NEADS MCC OP position background voice "United, another hijack, real world."

0904:18 NY Controller R55 asked American West 193 "you guys see the city from behind you there. American West responded It looked like the World Trade Center's on fire." NY responded "Yes it's a Boeing seven fifty seven we think just flew into the air into the building." AW193 responded, "Are you you're not kidding right." When told no, AW193 responded, "oh shit."

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0904:29 NEADS MCC "Sir, thank you, sir, we got a, we got a unconfirmed second hit, from another aircraft."

0904:35 NEADS ID position background voice. "This 3320 is way the hell over by Lake Erie. ID1 "Oh God, what phone were you on...United one seven five, one seven five, what is it, United 175 is the other aircraft, mode 3 is 3321."

0905:05 Unknown to NY Controller R55, "listening to CBS news on twelve ten they think it was a small twin." R55 responded, "Yeah I hope so we had air several aircraft identify it as a seven fifty seven." Unknown asked if it was a departure or an arrival to which R55 responded, "we don't know we think it was a hijack. We don't know where he came from sir actually we're really not certain."

0906:30 NEADS ID position. "uh, negative we just from New York Center, possible crash also, uh, you heard about the first...okay possibly a second."

0908:12 NEADS MCC, "Okay Foxy this is what I foresee we need to do, we need to talk to FAA, we need to tell them, this stuff keeps on going, we need to take those fighters, put them over Manhattan, okay, that's the best thing, that's the best place right now. Coordinate with FAA, tell them, if there's more out there right now, which we don't know, let's get them over Manhattan, at least we have some kind of play"

0908:42 NEADS ID position. "Yes sir just wanted to give you a heads up we have had two confirmed, well not confirmed, one hijacked aircraft and possibly another one, and yes we do have that information and we're working it now. This is for live world, live world yes."

0909:07 NEADS MCC background voice. "The second suspected aircraft is United 175, I just put that up there. MCC responded, "Okay this is what I got going, tell Foxy to scramble Langley, send them in the same location." Background voice "Battle, battle stations or scramble." MCC: "battle stations only at Langley."

0909:25 NEADS MCC "Okay are you listening, what I told the ~~SD~~ so far is, we need to get those fighters over Manhattan, because we don't know how

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many guys out of Boston could be (garbled)...you miss three or two, there could be more."

0909:50 NEADS ID position. Background voice "09, we went battlestations at 09." ID1, "I hope they cancel the exercise because this is ridiculous."

0910:08 NEADS ID position. "United Airlines dispatch says that United 175 is Nordo, and is not in radio contact. Is Nordo, is Nordo."

0910:34 NEADS MCC, "You know what, I don't like them there...okay okay I want those fighters closer in, I want them south of JFK."

At about same time: MCC/T Log: Both hijacks UAL 175 and A11 hit the world trade center.

0911:01 Unknown to R55, " We're getting news on nine eight and twelve ten they think it might be two aircraft." R55 responded, "Yeah there is a lot of talk there we had a couple of aircraft looked like they got hijacked and yeah I know at least one of them hit the World Trade Center, we don't know what happened to the other aircraft maybe both of them went in."

0911:09 The Herndon Command Center National Air Manager talked to the NY Operations Manager in Charge. "Barrett this is Ben Sliney the NOM at the Command Center do you have any further update on why you're ATC zero." Barrett responded, "because of the two terrorist activities that went on." Sliney then commented, "Ok so because of those two aircraft do you know the identity of the second aircraft or either aircraft." NY responded, "Well we don't have any confirmations on that that would probably have to come from on ground people we suspect." Sliney then said, "I am asking do you have any preliminary." Barrett responded "We suspect American eleven and United one seventy five is the best we can ascertain."

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