

DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Anthony Schifano, Area 3 Air Traffic Controller

Type of event: Interview

Date: Wednesday, September 24, 2003

Special Access Issues: none

Prepared by: Cate Taylor

Team Number: 8

Location: Indianapolis Air Traffic Control Center

Participants - Non-Commission: Anthony Schifano, Area 3 Air Traffic Controller; Eileen

Participants - Commission: John Farmer, Dana Hyde, Cate Taylor

Background:

Anthony Schifano began his training in 2000. He worked as an Air Traffic Controller in Oklahoma City beginning in May 2000 and then transferred to Indi's Area 3 in July 2000. From his training, the procedures to follow in a hijack situation are to verify the code given by the pilot of the aircraft, turn the aircraft over to the supervisor and continue working the other aircraft in the Area.

Schifano had never been confronted with a NORDO and no transponder situation.

Day of 9/11:

Schifano was sitting on the d-side, a radio associate position, next to Rudolph Gayde. Gayde took the handoff of AA77 from Washington and was handling AA77 before it lost transponder and radio communication. Gayde took a break, Chuck took over, and AA77 turned to a coast track on the scope just after a slight turn to the left.

Schifano told Richard Byard, the controller in charge of Area 3, that AA77 had lost communication. Byard ordered Schifano to call American Airlines. After the first call to American Airlines, Dave Boone and Katherine arrived in Area 3. Schifano also made a call to the next sector on AA77's flight path.

Initially, all ATC's were looking for primary tracks but this did not continue.

Schifano was relieved and went to the break room to watch the television. Here, he learned that the Pentagon had been hit. Schifano was relieved before the grounding of all flights began. When Schifano was in the break room, he heard about the reports of a search and rescue.

Schifano suggested that another plane could have been asked to look for AA77 in order to provide the ATC's with a location.

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Post 9/11:

On Wednesday or Thursday after 9/11, the FBI interviewed Schifano over the phone. Dave Boone and Chuck were also interviewed.

Today, if Schifano were confronted with a suspicious situation he would attempt to make contact with the aircraft and follow procedure by passing off the responsibility to his supervisor.

Recommendations:

Schifano believes that federalizing airport security and privatizing the airport industry will not improve airline safety.

He also suggested that there should be a way to always keep a transponder on. If they are so vital in communication between pilots and controllers, there should not be an off switch on transponders.