

9/11 RADIO STORIES

Stories behind the images

Written by

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International

Re-Imagined Radio
Season 11, Episode 09

Final draft

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Stories behind the images

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Season 11, Episode 09
Final Draft

Premier broadcast: September 18, 2023

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Sound design, Music composition, Post-Production by Marc Rose

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Summary

Tuesday morning, 11 September 2001, four passenger airplanes left airports in Boston, New York, and Newark bound for California. These airplanes were hijacked and turned into weapons.

Two were crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. One into the Pentagon building in Washington, DC. The fourth crashed into a field in Pennsylvania following a passenger revolt.

Endless television loops showed us the results. But not the many, simultaneous, stories evolving in real time behind these scenes as airline officials, air traffic controllers, and federal agents talked, frantically trying to learn what was happening, and determine how to stop it. Their telephone and radio communications were recorded. From those sources we offer these stories of what happened behind the 9/11 images.

Color Code

Yellow highlighted text = sound effect(s), either pre-recorded or created for episode. Pre-recorded audio is used as content in this episode.

~~**Magenta highlighted text with strike through**~~ = text deleted for episode timing

MUSIC = pre-recorded

MUSIC = bespoke, created for this episode

COLD OPEN

SFX: ACTUALITY #05. RECORDED
TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN
CRAIG ***, THE AMERICAN AIRLINES
EMERGENCY LINE OPERATOR, AND NIDIA
GONZALES, OPERATIONS SPECIALIST ON
DUTY AT RALEIGH, NC, RESERVATIONS
CENTER.

AAL: American Airlines Emergency line,
please state your emergency.

Gonzalez: Hey, this is Nidia at American
Airlines calling. I am monitoring a call
in which flight 11, the flight attendant
is advising our reps that the pilot,
everyone's been stabbed.

Gonzalez: They can't get into the
cockpit is what I'm hearing.

AAL: Okay. Who is this I'm talking to?

Gonzalez: Excuse me, this is Nidia at
American Airlines at the Raleigh
Reservation Center, I'm the operations
specialist on duty.

AAL: And, I'm sorry what was your name
again?

Gonzalez: Nidia.

AAL: Nidia, and what's your last name?

Gonzalez: Gonzalez, G-O-N-Z-A-L-E-Z.

AAL: Raleigh reservations, okay . . .

Gonzalez: I've got the flight attendant on the line with one of our agents.

AAL: Okay, and she's calling how?

Gonzalez: Through reservations. I can go in on the line and ask the flight attendant questions.

Gonzalez: I'm on with security, okay Betty? You are doing a great job just stay calm, okay. We are, absolutely.

AAL: Okay, we're contacting the flight crew now, we're al-- , we're also contacting ATC.

Gonzalez: Okay.

AAL: Anything else from the flight attendant?

Gonzalez: Uh, so far what I've gotten, the number five flight attendant's been stabbed, but she seems to be breathing, the number one seems to be stabbed pretty badly, and she's lying down on the floor, they don't know whether she is conscious or not. The other flight attendants are in the back, ummm, and that's as far as I know. It seems like the passengers in coach might not be aware of what's going on right now.

AAL: These two passengers were from first class?

Gonzalez: Okay, hold on. Hey Betty, you know any information as far as the men

in the cockpit with the pilots, were they from first class? They were sitting in two A and B.

AAL: Okay.

Gonzalez: They are in the cockpit with the pilot.

AAL: Who's helping them, is there a doctor on board?

Gonzalez: Is there a doctor on board, Betty that's helping you guys? You don't have any doctors on board? Okay. So, you've gotten all the first-class passengers out of first class?

Gonzalez: What's going on honey.

Gonzalez: Okay, The aircraft is erratic again, bobbing very erratically.

Gonzalez: She did say that all the first-class passengers have been moved back to coach, that first class the cabin is empty.

Apparently they might have sprayed something so it's, it's ummm, they're having a hard time breathing or getting in that area. What's going on Betty? Betty, talk to me. Betty, are you there? Betty? (Indistinct) do you think we lost her? Okay, so, we'll like we'll stay open. We, I think we might have lost her.

THEME AND ANNOUNCERMUSIC: RIR THEMEANNOUNCER

Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program about radio storytelling. I'm Jack Armstrong. With each episode we combine dialogue, sound effects, and music to engage your listening imagination. This episode is no different, and here to tell you about it is John Barber, producer and host.

HOST OPENHOST

Thank you Jack. Hello everyone. Welcome.

On September 11, 2001, four passenger airplanes were hijacked and turned into weapons.

Two were crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. The third was crashed into the Pentagon building in Washington, DC. The fourth crashed into a field in Pennsylvania, following a passenger revolt.

2,977 people were killed in what we now call "9/11," the largest terrorist event in United States' history.

Endless television loops showed us images of this destruction. But not the many stories evolving in real time behind the scenes as airline officials, air traffic controllers, and federal agents frantically tried to learn what was happening, and how to respond.

Their telephone and radio communications were recorded and are available as public records. We sample them for this episode.

The voices you will hear are those of real people, dealing with incomplete, unconfirmed, and often contradictory information. They do not understand the situations. They are confused. Unprepared. Afraid.

No offense is intended by including these voices, and in some cases, the names of their speakers. They are important to this story, as each performed an individual act of heroism.

HOST

Our radio storytelling originates from KXRW-FM. Vancouver, Washington's community radio station. We thank them for their support.

And we thank YOU for joining us as Re-Imagined Radio presents "9/11 Radio Stories: Stories behind the Images."

MUSIC: TRANSITION

AMERICAN 11

HOST

Tuesday morning, September 11, 2001, is clear and pleasant. A perfect morning for flying. Hundreds of domestic passenger airplane flights depart from airports across the United States. We focus on four.

The first is American Airlines Flight Eleven, a non-stop flight from Boston's Logan International Airport to Los Angeles, California. Boarding and pre-flight checks proceed without incident. At 7:59 AM, Eastern Time, with 92 people aboard, American Eleven departs Boston and begins climbing to its cruising altitude.

SFX: ACTUALITY #01. RADIO AND
TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS REGARDING
AMERICAN 11

AA11: Boston Center, good morning,
American 11 with you passing through one
niner zero for two three zero.

Boston Sector: American 11, Boston
Center, roger, climb, maintain level two
eight zero.

HOST

This contact between American Eleven and Boston Center is part of the safety and security regulations overseen by the Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA, of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The FAA operates twenty-two Air Route Traffic Control Centers across the United States, and a System Command Center in Herndon, Virginia. Each center is responsible for a defined portion of the country's airspace, and is named for a city within its boundaries. Each center controls the aircraft flying at high altitudes in its airspace. Centers accept control of aircraft from--or pass

it to--terminal control centers at airports, or other Air Traffic Control Centers.

Pilots are required to maintain contact with Air Traffic Control Centers along their flight routes.

At 8:09, Boston Center radios American Eleven and instructs the pilots to make a 20 degree turn to the right.

SFX: ACTUALITY #02. TURN RIGHT

Boston Sector: American 11 turn 20 degrees right.

AA11: Turning right, American 11.

HOST

At 8:13, five minutes later, Boston Center again tries to contact American Eleven.

SFX: ACTUALITY #03. LOST CONTACT

Boston Sector: American 11, climb, maintain flight level three five zero.

Boston Sector: American 11, climb, maintain flight level three five zero.

Boston Sector: American 11, Boston.

Boston Sector: American one one, the American on the frequency, how do you hear me?

HOST

Concerned about the lack of response from American Eleven, Boston Center calls Athens Center, in Western Massachusetts.

SFX: ACTUALITY #03. BOSTON SECTOR TO ATHENS SECTOR

Athens Sector: This is Athens.

Boston Sector: This is Boston, I turned American 20 left and I was going to climb him, he will not respond to me now at all.

Athens Sector: Looks like he is turning right.

Boston Sector: Yeah, I turned him 20 right.

Athens Sector: Oh, okay.

Boston Sector: And he's only going to, I think, twenty nine.

Athens Sector: Okay.

Boston Sector: Well.

Athens Sector: That's fine.

Boston Sector: But I'm not talking to him.

Athens Sector: He's NORDO, roger.

Boston Sector: Thanks.

HOST

Athens Center seems unconcerned, says American 11 is "NORDO," a term used to indicate aircraft experiencing radio trouble. Boston Center continues trying to contact American Eleven . . .

SFX: ACTUALITY #03. BOSTON CENTER,
"PLEASE IDENT"

Boston Sector: American 11 if you hear
Boston Center ident please, or
acknowledge.

Boston Sector: American 11, if you hear
Boston Center re-contact Boston Center
on one two seven point eight two, that's
American 11, one two seven eight two.

HOST

Boston Sector does not know that by 8:14 American Eleven has been hijacked by five passengers, armed with knives. Two hijackers take over the cockpit and control of the airplane.

The remaining three hijackers stay in the airplane cabin. Their job is to keep the passengers and crew under control.

The hijackers in the cockpit ignore the radio and turn off the transponder. Air traffic controllers are unable to contact the aircraft and only marginally able to track its location, altitude, air speed, direction, and destination. American Eleven is, essentially, invisible.

At 8:24, there are two clicks of a microphone switch . . . and then a cryptic radio announcement.

SFX: ACTUALITY #06. BOSTON AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AND MOHAMED ATTA, "WE HAVE SOME PLANES. NOBODY MOVE"

Boston Sector: Is that American 11 trying to call?

Atta: (Indistinct) we have some planes. Just stay quiet and we'll be okay. We are returning to the airport.

Boston Sector: And, uh, who's trying to call me, here?

Boston Sector: American 11 are you trying to call?

Atta: Nobody move, everything will be okay. If you try to make any moves, you will injure yourself and the airplane. Just stay quiet.

HOST

The voice from the American 11 cockpit is Mohamed Atta, leader of the five hijackers aboard American Eleven.

Air traffic controllers, hearing this unknown voice from the cockpit, suspect a hijacking. Throughout American Airlines, efforts to learn what is happening with American Eleven increase.

SFX: ACTUALITY #9 UPDATE ON AMERICAN 11

Dial tone.

Boston Controller: Go ahead 38.

Unknown Female Voice: Yeah, American 11. Ah, we suspect there is someone in the cockpit that has taken over. We have just put him in direct Watertown, Jamestown. Last we knew he was on present heading, cleared to flight level two nine zero. No one is talking to him. ARINC has been called. We broadcasted on guard. We've tried through company.

Unknown Boston Controller: Okay, thanks.

Unknown Female Voice: And 2-9-0 is not verified.

Unknown Boston Controller: Okay, thanks.

Unknown Female Voice: You're welcome.

SFX: ACTUALITY #10. TAKE BACK LOOK WEST OF ALBANY.

Unknown Boston Controller 2: Go ahead.

Unknown Female Voice: Yeah, I need you to look west of Albany, American 11, and put him on your scope. He is, ah, NORDO, has been since he talked to Boston High. We assume he's at flight level two nine zero. Ah, we're not sure. We think there is someone in the cockpit with him. Ah, we've broadcasted over guard, we've gone ARINC, we've gone company, nobody is talkin' to him. We don't know where he

is going, we don't know what altitude he's at.

Unknown Boston Controller 2: Okay.

Unknown Female Voice: Okay.

Unknown Boston Controller 2: Okay.
Thanks.

SFX: ACTUALITY #12. PASCIONE
SUMMATION TO UNKNOWN

Herndon Center: Well Boston Center claims that, uh, ah they lost radio communication with the aircraft.

Unknown: And transponder, too

Herndon Center: And the transponder. And there's also, ah, they're trackin' the primary target at this point, he was last known at ah flight level two nine zero.

Unknown: Uh, huh

Herndon Center: And he appears to have turned, ah, south, southwest bound, and uh, also, there was some mention of some sort of a, a threat bein' made, or ah

Unknown: He made?

Herndon Center: A threat to the cockpit, or, some threat.

Unknown: Oh shit, let me get the managers involved.

Herndon Center: In the cockpit.

(Indistinct) Boston is uncertain exactly what was said. I guess they are goin' to pull the tapes as quick as they can.

HOST

The crew and passengers aboard American Eleven also want to know what is happening. Two flight attendants contact American Airlines using their mobile telephones. One, at 8:30, is Amy Sweeney . . .

SFX: ACTUALITY #13. BOSTON FLIGHT SERVICE, SEGMENT ONE.

Howland: (Indistinct) Ray Howland.

Wyatt: Ray Howland, Nancy Wyatt, ah, Boston flight service.

Howland: Yes.

Wyatt: Okay, we've got the flight attendants on the line here.

Howland: You do have them on the line?

Wyatt: From the plane, yeah.

Howland: Can you conference them in with us?

Wyatt: I have no idea how to do that, if you can help me out, uh, hold, ah, he's getting some information, here.

Wyatt: I'm gonna read his notes for you.
Ah, it looks like ah he's Middle
Eastern. Speaks no English. He was in 10
B, 10 Baker.

Howland: Right

Wyatt: 9 D and G, speaks no speaks no
English. Ah, the plane's in a rapid
descent, ah

Howland: (Indistinct) Is the cockpit
still . . .

Wyatt: Yep. Okay, the flight attendants
are concerned they don't know what's
going on in the cockpit. Are you in
con-contact with them?

Howland: No we're not, (indistinct)
we're, we're tryin' to get in contact
with the cockpit.

Wyatt: Okay.

Howland: Alright. We really don't want
to tell her that.

Wyatt: Okay. Don't, okay got it. Okay
there, ah, we're not sure. Ah, okay,
looks like there's severe bleeding, that
ah, he's keeping her on the line,
there's severe bleeding, there's a
slashed throat.

Wyatt: Michael, is that severe, is that
slashed throat a flight attendant?

[Background] Michael: No, the Cap-

SFX: ACTUALITY #14. BOSTON FLIGHT
SERVICE SEGMENT TWO

[Background] Unknown: Amy, what's that?

Howland: Boston flight service has another one of the flight attendants on the phone here. Boston flight service. You lost it?

Howland: Okay, we lost the other one so I really need to get on the phone with her.

Wyatt: Something's wrong. Ah, Amy, Amy Sweeney's on the phone.

Howland: Amy Sweeney?

Wyatt: Yeah she's the number 9.

Howland: Okay.

Wyatt: And he's having trouble talkin' to her, right now?

Howland: Alright. These are the two that are injured, 1 and 5.

Wyatt: She started screaming and saying something's wrong, and now he's havin' trouble.

Howland: Okay.

Wyatt: (Indistinct) thinks he might be disconnected.

Wyatt: Okay, we just lost, ah, the connection.

Howland: Lost the connection.

Wyatt: Yep

Howland: [Sigh]

HOST

At 8:34, while the conversation you just heard is in progress, Mohamed Atta again addresses the passengers aboard American Eleven . . .

SFX: ACTUALITY #15 NOBODY MOVE.
GOING BACK TO THE AIRPORT.

Atta: Nobody move please. We are going back to the airport. Don't try to make any stupid moves.

HOST

Instead of addressing the passengers aboard American Eleven using the airplane's intercom, Atta mistakenly broadcasts throughout the American Airlines radio network. A hijacking seems very possible and air traffic controllers at Boston Center and headquarters in Herndon, Virginia, scramble to determine where American Eleven is headed.

SFX: ACTUALITY #17. TRACON BY
SPARTA.

Boston Central: Boston Center here. Can I get New York TRACON?

Herndon Center: You bet (indistinct) with the, ah, cockpit.

Boston Central: Yeah, for the American 11.

Herndon Center: Say it again?

Boston Center: Oh, reference American 11.

Herndon Center: Have you have you had any contact with him yet?

Boston Center: Ah, no, no contact, ah it is confirmed ah hijack, though.

NY TRACON: Tracon

Boston Center: Okay, TRACON, hi, Boston Center, ah good morning, American 11, ah seven fifty seven, possible hijack

NY TRACON: K. American 11, seven, seven five and uh (indistinct). Where's he landing?

Boston Center: Ah, right now, we don't have any idea. But ah, he was to the Northwest of Albany and now he's ah down by Sparta, losing speed very rapidly, we believe he is a primary only, and uh, we believe he's in a descent, and that's why he's, ah, he's, he's slowing down.

HOST

TRACON is an abbreviation for Terminal Radar Approach Control. These facilities house air traffic controllers who guide aircraft approaching or departing

airports. Boston Center contacts New York TRACON because they believe American Eleven is flying in the direction of New York City.

At 8:48, New York Center reports the current status of American Eleven . . .

SFX: ACTUALITY #35. THIS IS NEW YORK CENTER . . .

New York Center: Okay, this is New York Center, ah, we're watching the airplane, he is 15 west of Kennedy now, we had one or two confirmations that he was still at twenty nine, excuse me, one at twenty nine, one at thirty one, didn't, couldn't see him.

New York Center: Ah, I also had conversation with American Airlines, and they've told us that they believe that, ah, one of their stewardesses was stabbed and that there are people in the cockpit who have control of the aircraft, and that's all the information they have, ah, right now.

HOST

Earlier, I said two flight attendants contacted American Airlines using their mobile telephones. Amy Sweeney was one, and we heard airline officials trying to determine what was happening.

The other flight attendant was Betty Ong. We heard a bit of her telephone call at the beginning of our episode. Ong called American Airlines

Reservations in North Carolina. Her call was linked to Nadia Gonzalez, operations specialist on duty, who in turn called American Airlines Emergency. Let's listen to those communications again, this time in context.

SFX: ACTUALITY #05. RECORDED
TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN
CRAIG **?***, THE AMERICAN AIRLINES
EMERGENCY LINE OPERATOR, BETTY ONG,
AND NIDIA GONZALES, OPERATIONS
SPECIALIST ON DUTY AT RALEIGH, NC,
RESERVATIONS CENTER.

AAL: American Airlines Emergency line, please state your emergency.

Gonzalez: Hey, this is Nidia at American Airlines calling. I am monitoring a call in which flight 11, the flight attendant is advising our reps that the pilot, everyone's been stabbed.

~~Gonzalez: They can't get into the cockpit is what I'm hearing.~~

AAL: Okay. Who is this I'm talking to?

Gonzalez: Excuse me, this is Nidia at American Airlines at the Raleigh Reservation Center, I'm the operations specialist on duty.

AAL: And, I'm sorry what was your name again?

Gonzalez: Nidia.

AAL: Nidia, and what's your last name?

Gonzalez: Gonzalez, G-O-N-Z-A-L-E-Z.

AAL: Raleigh reservations, okay . . .

Gonzalez: I've got the flight attendant on the line with one of our agents.

AAL: Okay, and she's calling how?

Gonzalez: Through reservations. I can go in on the line and ask the flight attendant questions.

Gonzalez: I'm on with security, okay Betty? You are doing a great job just stay calm, okay. We are, absolutely.

AAL: Okay, we're contacting the flight crew now, we're al-- , we're also contacting ATC.

Gonzalez: Okay.

AAL: Anything else from the flight attendant?

Gonzalez: Uh, so far what I've gotten, the number five flight attendant's been stabbed, but she seems to be breathing, the number one seems to be stabbed pretty badly, and she's lying down on the floor, they don't know whether she is conscious or not. The other flight attendants are in the back, ummm, and that's as far as I know. It seems like the passengers in coach might not be aware of what's going on right now.

AAL: These two passengers were from first class?

Gonzalez: Okay, hold on. Hey Betty, you know any information as far as the men in the cockpit with the pilots, were they from first class? They were sitting in two A and B.

AAL: Okay.

Gonzalez: They are in the cockpit with the pilots.

AAL: Who's helping them, is there a doctor on board?

Gonzalez: Is there a doctor on board, Betty that's helping you guys? You don't have any doctors on board? Okay. So, you've gotten all the first-class passengers out of first class?

SFX: NOTE: FROM THIS POINT TO END OF REGION, WE HEAR DOUBLE BREATHING IN THE TELEPHONE LINE, ACHIEVED THROUGH DOUBLING THE BREATHING HEARD IN THE RECORDING WITH A DUPLICATE SFX TRACK. THIS IS AN ATTEMPT TO ADD TENSION. IF IT DOES NOT WORK, IT CAN BE ELIMINATED.

Gonzalez: What's going on honey.

Gonzalez: Okay, The aircraft is erratic again, bobbing very erratically.

Gonzalez: She did say that all the first-class passengers have been moved

back to coach, that first class the cabin is empty.

Apparently they might have sprayed something so it's, it's ummm, they're having a hard time breathing or getting in that area. What's going on Betty? Betty, talk to me. Betty, are you there? Betty? (Indistinct) do you think we lost her? Ok, so, we'll like we'll stay open. We, I think we might have lost her.

HOST

The connection with Betty Ong is lost at 8:46 AM when American Eleven crashes into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City, less than an hour after its departure, killing all five hijackers, 11 crew, and 76 passengers on board.

The impact of American Eleven is immediately seen.

SFX: ACTUALITY #19 MAJOR FIRE

Unknown Pilot: Anybody know what that smoke is in lower Manhattan?

New York Center: I'm sorry, say again.

Unknown Pilot: Lot of smoke in lower Manhattan.

New York Center: A lot of smoke in lower Manhattan?

Unknown Pilot: (Indistinct) coming out of the, ah, top of the World Trade Center building, a major fire.

MUSIC: SOMBER TRANSITION

UNITED 175

HOST

You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber. Our episode is "9/11 Radio Stories." We're using recorded radio and telephone conversations between airline officials, air traffic controllers, and federal agents as they try to understand that passenger airplanes are being hijacked and used as weapons during the terrorist events of September 11, 2001.

Four passenger airplanes are involved. Each is a Boeing Seven Fifty Seven aircraft chosen because hijackers thought they could override the autopilot systems and crash the airplanes.

Hijackers chose cross-country flights because the aircraft carried larger loads of aviation fuel which would increase the explosion and fire when they were crashed.

The first hijacked airplane is American Airlines Flight Eleven. It left Boston, bound for Los Angeles, at 7:59 AM, was hijacked by 8:14, and crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City at 8:46, 47 minutes later.

MUSIC: TRANSITION

The second airplane hijacked is United Airlines Flight One Seventy Five, which departs Boston at 8:14 AM, just fifteen minutes behind American Eleven. Like American Eleven, United One Seventy Five is bound for Los Angeles. Aboard are 56 passengers and 9 crew.

At 8:38 United One Seventy Five affirms sighting American Eleven, and their stories, and fates, become intertwined.

SFX: ACTUALITY #32. UA175 AFFIRMS AA11.

New York Center: Okay, United 175, you have him at your twelve o'clock, now five, ten miles.

UA175: Affirmative we have him, uh, he looks about twenty, say about twenty nine, twenty eight thousand.

New York Center: Okay, thank you.

HOST

At 8:39, New York Center tells United One Seventy Five to turn right 30 degrees to avoid American Eleven, which is descending. United One Seventy Five responds . . .

SFX: ACTUALITY #33. UA175 VECTORED 30 RIGHT FOR TRAFFIC

UA175: Thirty degrees to the right, United 175, heavy.

HOST

United One Seventy Five uses the term "heavy" as required by FAA regulations to describe itself as weighing more than 300,000 pounds at takeoff. For United One Seventy Five, part of its weight comes from approximately 9,100 gallons of aviation fuel.

At 8:41 United One Seventy Five radios New York Center to report a suspicious radio transmission . . .

SFX: ACTUALITY #34. 084131 AA11

UA175 ZNY REPORT OF SUSPICIOUS

TRANSMISSION BOSTON

UA175: New York, United 175, heavy.

New York Sector: United one seventy five, go ahead.

UA175: Ah, we figured we'd wait to go to your center, ah, we heard a suspicious transmission, ah, on our departure out of Boston, ah, with someone, ah, uh, sounded like someone keyed the mike and said, uh, everyone, uh, stay in your seats.

New York Sector: Oh, okay, I'll pass that along over here. Hey Kingston on ninety three line.

Kingston Sector: Go ahead.

New York Sector: That United 175 just came on my frequency, and he said that he heard a suspicious, uh, transmission when they were leaving Boston.

Kingston Sector: Oh yeah?

New York Sector: Everybody stay in their seats, that's what they heard as a suspicious transmission.

HOST

This reported suspicious transmission was probably Mohamed Atta who at 8:24 said over the radio . . .

SFX: ACTUALITY #06. BOSTON AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AND MOHAMED ATTA, "WE HAVE SOME PLANES. NOBODY MOVE"

Atta: (Indistinct) we have some planes. Just stay quiet and we'll be okay. We are returning to the airport.

Atta: Nobody move, everything will be okay. If you try to make any moves, you will injure yourself and the airplane. Just stay quiet.

HOST

Sometime between 8:42 and 8:46, United One Seventy Five is hijacked when two passengers force their way into the cockpit, attack the pilots, and take control of the airplane. Three other hijackers control the passengers and flight attendants.

At 8:47 United One Seventy Five's transponder is changed twice within a minute, but never turned off, and so can be monitored.

At 8:51 traffic control notices the change to United One Seventy Five's transponder . . .

SFX: ACTUALITY #36. UA175 ZNY

RECYCLE TRANSPONDER

New York Center: United 175, recycle your transponder and squawk code of one four seven zero.

New York Center: United 175, New York.

New York Center: United 175, do you read New York?

New York Center: Delta 1489, do you read New York?

D1489: Delta 1489, go ahead.

New York Center: Okay, just wanted to make sure you read New York, ah, United, United 175, do you read New York?

HOST

Air Traffic Control works to move other aircraft away from United One Seventy Five, now rapidly descending. Two mid-air collisions between United One Seventy Five and other airplanes are narrowly avoided.

At 8:55, United One Seventy Five is reported as probably hijacked.

At 8:58, United One Seventy Five is reported over New Jersey, altitude 28,500 feet, headed toward New York City.

United One Seventy Five begins a sustained power dive, descending more

than 24,000 feet in approximately five minutes.

SFX: ACTUALITY #41. HEY JOE ZNY
TRACON X1085 TMU

New York Center Unknown: Hey Joe, you see three three two one code just southwest of Newark by about fifteen, eighteen, twenty miles.

Joe: Hold on.

New York Center Unknown: Fifteen thousand, descending.

Joe: I'm looking, hold one, southwest of Newark by about fifteen twenty?

Joe: I don't see any.

New York Center Unknown: They were trackin' him, made a hard left turn, he descended pretty rapidly, and especially with just happened in there.

Joe: I got somebody that keeps coasting, but he looks like he's goin' into one of those small airports down there.

New York Center Unknown: Hold on a second. No, this guy's a big boy. This guy's a big boy cause he's leavin' some big contrails, I'm trying to bring him up here, get ya, there he is, right there, hold on.

[Background] Unknown: Southwest of Newark.

Joe: He's out of ninety five hundred, nine thousand now

New York Center Unknown: Do you know who he is?

Joe: We just, we just, we don't know who he is. We're just pickin' him up now.

New York Center Unknown: Alright. Heads up man, looks like another one comin' in.

Joe: Alright.

HOST

New York Center and New York TRACON work together to locate United One Seventy Five.

SFX: ACTUALITY #42. UA175 VIS
UNITED REPORT INTO TOWER TRACOM
TMUDD

New York Center Unknown: Hey, can you look out your window right now?

New York TRACON: Yeah.

New York Center Unknown: Can you, can you see a guy at about four thousand feet, about five east of the airport right now, look's like he's—

New York TRACON: Yeah, I see him.

New York Center Unknown: Do you see that guy, look, is he descending into the building also?

New York TRACON: He's descending really quick too, Yeah.

New York Center Unknown: Well that's—

New York TRACON: Forty five hundred feet now, he just dropped eight hundred feet in like, like one, one sweep.

New York Center Unknown: That's another situation. What kind of a plane is that, can you guys tell?

New York TRACON: I don't know. I'll read it out in a minute.

[Background] New York TRACON:
(Indistinct).

New York TRACON: Another one just hit just hit the building.

New York Center: Wow.

[Background] New York TRACON:
(Indistinct). Oh my god.

New York TRACON: Another one just hit it hard.

New York Center: Another one just hit the World Trade.

New York TRACON: The whole building just, ah, came apart.

[Background] New York TRACON:
(Indistinct). Oh my god.

New York Center Unknown: Holy smokes.
Alright. I guess you guys are going to
be busy.

SFX: ACTUALITY #43. UA175 ZNY 2D
AIRCRAFT INTO WTC

TRACON: I think an airplane just plowed
into the City

NY Center: I, yeah, they did, ah, duh,
the World Trade Center hit (indistinct).

TRACON: No, another one, we just saw
another one do it.

NY Center: Another one?

TRACON: Yeah.

NY Center: Holy cow, that's two, ah, one
just hit (indistinct) an hour ago.

TRACON: Yeah, one just a moment ago.

NY Center: No shit.

HOST

At 9:03, seventeen minutes behind
American Eleven, United One Seventy Five
crashes nose first into the World Trade
Center's South Tower, less than an hour
after its departure, killing all 5
hijackers, 9 crew, and 51 passengers
aboard.

MUSIC: RIR THEME FOR BREAK

THE FUSEBOX BREAK

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber, producer and host. We'll return to our episode, "9/11 Radio Stories," in just a moment. But first I want to tell you about The Fusebox Show . . . It's a different kind of radio storytelling, full of quirky conversation and comedy, and voices you might have expected to hear back in the days of CB radio. Here's a sample . . .

SFX: THE FUSEBOX SHOW TEASER

HOST Learn more at *The Fusebox Show* website, thefuseboxshow dot com.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, FADE UNDER AND
OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING**AMERICAN 77

HOST You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode follows four passenger airplanes used as weapons during the events of September 11, 2001.

The first was American Airlines Flight Eleven, hijacked enroute from Boston to Los Angeles and crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City, 47 minutes after departure.

The second was United Airlines Flight One Seventy Five, also en-route from Boston to Los Angeles. It was hijacked and crashed into the South Tower of the World Trade Center, seventeen minutes

after American Eleven hit the North Tower.

Both aircraft were hijacked by terrorist teams. Two from each team were trained and licensed pilots. The remaining team members were responsible for controlling the crew and passengers.

The nineteen hijackers arrived in the United States from different European locations in 2000 and 2001.

They stayed in hotels and motels in different cities on the Eastern Seaboard of The United States.

The pilots took flight training at aviation schools in Arizona and Florida. The others visited gyms and health clubs, preparing for their upcoming missions.

The date, September 11, was selected because one of the targets was the US Capital Building where it was thought Congress would be in session.

MUSIC: TRANSITION

The third airliner hijacked that morning is American Airlines Flight Seventy Seven. The airliner leaves Dulles International Airport, in Washington, DC, at 8:20 AM, bound for Los Angeles, California. Aboard are 58 passengers and 6 crew.

American Seventy Seven is hijacked soon after its departure, between 8:51 and 8:54. The two hijackers in the cockpit turn off the aircraft's radio and transponder.

At 8:56, Indianapolis Center Air Traffic Control tries to contact American Seventy Seven.

SFX: ACTUALITY #57. 57. ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT A77

Indianapolis Center: American 77, Indy.

Indianapolis Center: American 77, Indy.

Indianapolis Center: American 77,
American, Indy.

Indianapolis Center: American 77,
American, Indy, radio check, how do you
read?

Indianapolis Center: American, ah, 77,
American, radio check, how do you read?

[Dial tone]

Unknown: This is, ah, DACOS.

HOST

~~"DACOS" stands for "Data Communication System." Indianapolis Center called DACOS hoping to learn more about American Seventy Seven. DACOS does not seem interested to help.~~

SFX: ACTUALITY #57. CONTINUED.
ATTEMPTS TO CONTACT A77

Indianapolis Center: This is, ah, Henderson, American 77, I don't know what happened to him. I'm trying to [background (indistinct)] plane took a turn to the south, and, and now I'm ah, I don't know what altitude he's at or what he's doin', (indistinct) headed towards Falmouth at thirty five.

Unknown: Okay, just let me know.

Indianapolis Center: Okay, I'll try to get a hold of him. Thanks.

Indianapolis Center: American 77, Indy, radio check, how do you read?

Indianapolis Center: American, ah, 77, Indy Center, how do you read?

[Dial tone]

DACOS: DACOS.

Indianapolis Center: This is Henderson. Still haven't got American 77, ah, last he was at thirty five goin' to Falmouth, so I don't know where he is out there anywhere, yet, so we're still tryin' to get a hold of him, we contacted the company.

DACOS: Okay.

Indianapolis Center: Okay.

Indianapolis Center: American 77, Indy.

AA2493: Center, American, ah, 2493.

Indianapolis Center: American 2493, go ahead.

AA2493: Yeah, we, ah, sent a message to dispatch to have him come up on twenty twenty seven, is that what you want him to do?

Indianapolis Center: Yeah, we had him on west side of our airspace, and he went into coast, and don't have a track on him, and now's he not talkin' to me, so we don't know what exactly happened to him. We're trying to get a hold of him. We also contacted your company, so thanks for the help.

AA2493: Alright.

HOST

Indianapolis Center uses the phrase "went into coast" to mean they cannot track the airplane using radar. Essentially, American Seventy Seven is invisible.

At 8:58, Indianapolis Center calls American Airlines Dispatch looking for help.

SFX: ACTUALITY #58. FIRST CONTACT, AA DISPATCH

American Airlines: American dispatch, Jim McDonald.

Indianapolis Center: This Indianapolis Center, we're trying to get a hold of American 77.

American Airlines: Okay.

Indianapolis Center: On frequency one two zero point two seven.

American Airlines: One two zero-

Indianapolis Center: Point two seven. We were talkin' to him and all of a sudden it just ah-

American Airlines: Okay. Alright we'll get a hold of him for ya.

Indianapolis Center: Alright.

HOST

~~At 9:02, Indianapolis Center again calls American Airlines Dispatch.~~

~~SFX: ACTUALITY #59. SECOND CONTACT WITH AA DISPATCH~~

~~American Airlines: American dispatch, Jim McDonald.~~

~~Indianapolis Center: Yes, this is Indianapolis Center. We, ah, don't know if we talked to the same guy, about American 77.~~

~~American Airlines: Yeah, I (indistinct) called him, but I didn't get a reply back from them.~~

~~Indianapolis Center: We, we, ah, lost track control of the guy. He's in coast track, so we have, we don't really know where his target is and we can't get a hold of him. Ah-~~

~~American Airlines: I tried.~~

~~Indianapolis Center: You guys tried him
and no response?~~

~~American Airlines: No response.~~

~~[Background] Unknown: (Indistinct).~~

~~Indianapolis Center: Yeah, we have no
radar contact and, ah, no communications
with him, so if you guys can try him
again.~~

~~American Airlines: We're doin' it.~~

~~Indianapolis Center: Alright. Thanks a
lot.~~

~~American Airlines: We're doin' it. Thank
you.~~

HOST

At 9:11, Indianapolis Center contacts American Airlines Dispatch ~~for a third time~~, still looking for information about American Seventy Seven.

SFX: ACTUALITY #60 THIRD CONTACT
WITH AA DISPATCH

~~American Airlines: American Dispatch,
Jim McDonald.~~

~~Indianapolis Center: Indianapolis
Center. Did you get a hold of American
77 by chance?~~

American Airlines: No sir, but we have an unconfirmed report that a second airplane hit the World Trade Center.

Indianapolis Center: Say again.

American Airlines: You know we lost American 11, to a hijackin', so, American was up, ah, a Boston to Los Angeles flight.

Indianapolis Center: It was, alright, I can't really, I can't hear what you're sayin' there. Did you say American 11?

American Airlines: Yes. We were hijacked.

Indianapolis Center: (Indistinct).

American Airlines: It was a Boston LA flight. And 77 is a Dulles LA flight. And, ah, we have an unconfirmed report a second airplane just flew into the World Trade Center.

Indianapolis Center: Thank you very much. Good bye.

HOST

This radio conversation is notable for its confusion and chaos. It also provides useful information. American Airlines Dispatcher Jim McDonald confirms the hijacking of American Eleven and it crashing into the World Trade Center. Although he did not say directly, McDonald seems to suggest that American Airlines thinks American Seventy Seven is also hijacked. And, he

notes, quote, "unconfirmed reports," unquote of a second airplane hitting the World Trade Center. Was that second airplane American Seventy Seven? And if not, where is the airplane?

HOST

At 9:16, Air Traffic Control System Command Center, in Herndon, VA, contacts Bill Halleck at American Airlines seeking information.

SFX: ACTUALITY #61. KING AT ATCSCC
CALLS HALLECK AT AA.

King: Are you able to confirm anything within your airline to us?

Halleck: No, unfortunately, ah-

King: How about, can you tell me if we know for sure if it was American 11 that went into the Trade Center or not?

Halleck: We think that's who it was.

King: Okay.

Halleck: And we're missin' another flight also.

King: Ah, what flight are you missing?

Halleck: 77.

King: And when is the last time you knew for sure something about him?

Halleck: Ah, he was in, ah, wait a minute, well there's a, I don't know how he got up there.

King: There's a data block (indistinct)

Halleck: But 77 is up there also.

King: Okay.

Halleck: He's out of Dulles.

King: Okay, and—

Halleck: Dulles LA, and they both ah apparently have been hijacked, and 11 is we're pretty sure is in there and, and, ah, 77, we were talkin' to him according to Indianapolis Center

King: Uh huh.

Halleck: About 45 minutes ago, and, uh, in Indy Center.

King: Uh huh.

Halleck: I don't know he got to, to, ah, back to the Trade Center. I have no idea if, if that happened.

King: Okay. It may not have, we have another call sign, of course we don't know for sure, any of these call signs right now, but, if we find that it's your aircraft we'll certainly give you a call.

Halleck: So, ah, you have ah, you have two airplanes in the Trade Center?

King: Yes.

Halleck: And ah you don't know who either one of them are, for sure?

King: Yeah, that's true

Halleck: Okay.

King: If I did, I would share it with you.

Halleck: Okay. Thanks (indistinct).

King: Alright. Bye, Bill.

HOST

At 9:18, Bob Summersall, at the Air Traffic Control Strategic Command Center, ~~in Herndon, Virginia~~, contacts Indianapolis Center by radio and requests information about American Seventy Seven.

SFX: ACTUALITY #63. 091836 AA77

SUMMERSALL TO ZID FROM ATCSCC ZID
TMU

Indianapolis Center: Indy.

Herndon Center: Hey Indy, this is Bob, Command Center. Need you to find, tell me anything, or everything you can about American 77, where he is and if you have radar or not.

Indianapolis Center: Well, okay, I'm listenin' to my Ops Manager talk to Washington.

Herndon Center: I'm sorry.

Indianapolis Center: We were talkin' to him in the vicinity of, ah, Henderson.

Herndon Center: Henderson? What's Henderson?

Indianapolis Center: Hang on, hang on a second. Okay. We, ah, I guess we were talkin' to him, in the vicinity of Henderson, HNN. We lost communications and radar with him. Hang on a minute, I'm goin' to have the Ops Manager tell ya the story.

Thomas: Hello, Command Center.

Herndon Center: Yes sir.

Thomas: This is John Thomas, Ops Manager. I think we need to let everybody know this right away, if they don't already. American 77 was over, ah, was just west of Charleston, West Virginia, at flight level three five zero, it's a heav-, heavy Boeing seven fifty two, and disappeared off our radar scope about twelve fifty six Z, along with lost, ah, frequency. We were treating it as a lost, started to do some procedures to notify search and rescue, and what not, when-, when American Airlines told us they'd had some aircraft, or an aircraft hijacked.

We now believe that aircraft may have been hijacked, although no one has, we have nothing, you know, to verify that. What with the World Trade Center we could have another loose aircraft out there somewhere.

Herndon Center: Okay. At the time of loss do you, ah, what altitude was he at? Flight level.

Thomas: Flight level, flight level three five zero.

Herndon Center: And he just, just lost primary, also?

Thomas: Lost all, yes lost, no primary, or ah that we could see. Course we couldn't, wouldn't necessarily be able to pick up a primary there anyway.

Herndon Center: I'm assuming then that you're, ah, doing what you can to do a primary read, re-track on him, if you can do that.

Thomas: Yes, sure.

Herndon Center: And then, ah, so at twelve fifty-six Zulu we lost front comm and radar. Any, ah, ELTs?

Thomas: No ELTs.

Herndon Center: Ah, um, okay, ah, any more information you get, I'd appreciate it, and I'll forward this immediately up

to the NOM and everyone that's standin'
up there.

Thomas: Thank you.

Herndon Center: Thank you, bye.

Thomas: Bye.

HOST

These conversations illustrate the reality of the situation. Commercial airplanes have disappeared from radar screens. Radio contact goes unanswered. Hijacking is suspected. Reports of airplanes crashing into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City are circulating. Are the missing airplanes involved?

The lack of information is frustrating. And confusing, as we can hear in this next recorded conversation, between the Federal Aviation Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, at 9:31, thirty minutes after the drama began.

SFX: ACTUALITY #62. WRONG RECAP

FBI: FAA

FAA: (Indistinct) Boston FBI.

FBI: Go ahead FBI is on.

FAA: Okay. We have two reports,
preliminary information, ah, believe to
be American Airlines flight 77 and
flight 11, ah, collided with World Trade

Center. Ah, also, a preliminary report, ah, United Airlines flight 175 off radar. Ah, no further information.

[Background] Unknown: (Indistinct) get that set up. Right. Yes

FBI: Okay. So that's American 77 and United 175?

FAA: That's correct.

FBI: Um, do we have their, ah, input of origin on both of those?

FAA: Okay, back to FBI. It's American flight 77, second flight is 11. Ah, those are the two aircraft believed to be involved with World Trade Center. Ah, route is reported as Dulles to Los Angeles for 77 and Boston to Los Angeles for 11. United Airlines is not, ah, believed to be involved in World Trade Center at this time.

FBI: Okay. So it's American 77 and American 11?

FAA: That's, ah, that's correct.

FBI: American 11 was Boston to LA?

FAA: Ah, that's the report I've got.

FBI: Okay, and the other one was Dulles to LA?

FAA: Dulles to LAX.

[Background] FAA: I've got, ah, ah, two flights here now. The second one was American Airlines 77.

FBI: Okay, so it's 77 and 11?

[Background] FAA: Now a Dulles to LA.

FAA: That's affirmative. The other report was regarding United 175. We had a report that it was, ah, off the radar, ah—

[Background] FAA: (Indistinct) United Airlines was not involved.

FBI: Okay, is that, ah, where was that United 175 from?

FAA: Ah, we're getting conflicting reports on that, ah, FBI, on the 175.

FBI: Where did it go off radar?

[Background] Unknown: United 1, oh, 175.

FAA: Stand by please. Back to FBI. I've got a report from eastern, FAA eastern region air traffic, that it dropped off radar that it dropped over Indiana.

HOST

So where is American Seventy Seven? The passenger airliner departed Washington, DC, at 8:20 that morning. At 9:36 the Tower Controller at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport radios GOFER Zero Six with information about an approaching aircraft.

SFX: ACTUALITY #64. GOFER 06 &
REAGAN ABOUT SIGHTING OF LOW FLYING
757

Reagan National Tower Controller: Gofer zero six, traffic is eleven o'clock and five miles north bound, fast moving, type and altitude unknown.

Gofer 06: Gofer 06. We have the traffic in sight, twelve o'clock.

Reagan National Tower Controller: Ah, you have the traffic, do you know what kind it is? Can you see?

Gofer 06: Looks like a seven fifty seven, sir.

Reagan National Tower Controller: A seven fifty seven, can you estimate his altitude?

Gofer 06: Ah, looks like he's at low altitude right now, sir.

Reagan National Tower Controller: Gofer eight six [sic], thank you.

HOST

GOFER Zero Six is the call sign for a Minnesota Air National Guard C-130H cargo airplane piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Steven O'Brien. He and his crew are returning from delivering emergency relief supplies in the Caribbean. They departed Andrews Air Force Base, just southeast of Washington, at about 9:30. At 9:36, Reagan National Tower Controller "vectors" or changes the

flight path of GOFER Zero Six to follow the air traffic around the airport.

SFX: ACTUALITY #65. 093641 GOFER 06
VECTORED FOR TRAFFIC

Gofer 06: That, ah, traffic for Gofer zero six is still in a descent now, and, uh, looks like he's rolled out northeast bound.

Reagan National Tower Controller:
Alright. Thank You.

~~[Background] Unknown: Swan, swan, anyone?~~

~~Reagan National Tower Controller: Gofer eight six [sic] climb and maintain, ah-~~

~~[Background] Unknown: You got a military?~~

~~Reagan National Tower Controller: Yeah, stand by. Gofer eight six, turn right and follow the traffic please.~~

Reagan National Tower Controller: Gofer eight six, turn right heading zero eight zero, we're gonna vector you for the traffic.

Gofer 06: Okay, zero eight zero, Gofer zero six (indistinct)

Reagan National Tower Controller:
Dulles, I'm keeping Gofer eight six, um, zero six with me for a while.

HOST

At 9:38 GOFER Zero Six reports . . .

SFX: ACTUALITY #66. AIRCRAFT IS
DOWN

Gofer 06: And, uh, Washington, this is
Gofer zero six.

Reagan National Tower Controller: Gofer
zero six, go ahead.

Gofer 06: Yes sir, that aircraft is
down, he's in our twelve o'clock
position, ah, look's like it's just to
the northwest of the airfield at this
time, sir.

Reagan National Tower Controller: Gofer
eight six, thank you. Descend and
maintain two thousand.

Gofer 06: Okay. We are down to two
thousand. And, uh, this is Gofer zero
six, it looks like that aircraft crashed
into the Pentagon, sir.

Reagan National Tower Controller: Gofer
eight six, Gofer zero six, thank you.

SFX: ACTUALITY #67. GOFER 06 AC
CRASHED INTO WEST SIDE PENTAGON

Gofer 06: Understand you still want
Gofer zero six to descend to two
thousand sir.

Reagan National Tower Controller: Gofer
zero six, you can maintain three

thousand and, ah, turn left heading two seven zero.

Gofer 06: Okay. Left turn to two seven zero, Gofer zero six, ah, any chance we can circle around the Pentagon, sir, on our two seven zero turn.

Reagan National Tower Controller: Gofer zero six, approved as requested.

Gofer 06: Gofer zero six.

Reagan National Tower Controller: Gofer, ah, zero six, okay, they're asking if you would go ahead and move away now towards the west, two seventy heading and, ah, two thousand for now.

Gofer 06: Roger, we're climbing to three thousand sir and it looks like that aircraft has impacted the west side of the Pentagon.

Reagan National Tower Controller: Alright. Thank you.

MUSIC: SOMBER TRANSITION

HOST

American Seventy Seven departed Washington Dulles International Airport at 8:20 AM, bound for Los Angeles. Between 8:51 and 8:54 American Seventy Seven was hijacked in the vicinity of Pike County, Ohio. Two hijackers took control of the cockpit. The other three remained in the aircraft's cabin. At 8:56 the aircraft's hijackers turned off

the transponder and used the autopilot to set a course East, toward Washington, DC. At 9:29 the hijackers disengaged the autopilot and began flying the aircraft manually. The aircraft was detected by radar at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, as it rapidly descended, turned, and approached the Pentagon and downtown Washington, DC. ~~Air traffic controllers thought the aircraft was military because of its high speed and maneuvering.~~ As we heard, a passing military cargo plane, GOFER Zero Six, identified the aircraft as being American Seventy Seven.

At 9:37, one hour and seventeen minutes after take off, flying at 530 miles per hour, American Seventy Seven crashes into the Western side of the Pentagon building at the first floor level. In less than one second American Seventy Seven penetrates 310 feet into the building. All five hijackers, six crew, and fifty three passengers aboard American Seventy Seven are killed, along with 125 people in the Pentagon at the time of impact.

MUSIC: TRANSITION

UNITED 93

HOST

You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber. Our episode is "9/11 Radio Stories."

On September 11, 2001, four passenger airplanes are hijacked and used as weapons.

Two were hijacked soon after their departure from Boston. Another was hijacked after leaving Washington, DC. All were bound for Los Angeles.

The fourth airliner, United Airlines Flight Ninety Three leaves Newark International Airport, New Jersey, on a non-stop flight to San Francisco, California, at 8:42. Aboard are 37 passengers and 7 crew.

By 9:02, United Ninety Three reaches its cruising altitude of 35,000 feet.

At 9:24, United Ninety Three receives a warning about two airplanes hitting the World Trade Center in New York City. At 9:26, pilot Jason Dahl responds and asks for confirmation of this strange message.

At 9:28, the hijacking of United Ninety Three begins. Cleveland Center air traffic control hears strange noises from the cockpit.

SFX: ACTUALITY #87. UA93 LAST
NORMAL AND FIRST TROUBLE

Cleveland Center Controller: United 93,
that traffic for you is one o'clock,
twelve miles eastbound, three seven
zero.

~~UA93: Negative contact, we're looking,
United ninety three.~~

UA93: Hey (indistinct yelling).

UA93: (Indistinct yelling) mayday
(indistinct yelling).

~~Cleveland Center Controller: You got
United 93?~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller 2: United
93, south of Chardon, descended.~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller: What's
that?~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller 2: I just
sayin' it looks like he descended there.~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller: I don't
think so. United 93, verify three five
zero.~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller 2. United
93, Cleveland~~

~~Cleveland Center: Go ahead (indistinct).~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller 2: Do you
have United 93 south of Chardon?~~

~~Cleveland Center: We hear some funny
noises we're trying to get him. Do you
have him?~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller 2: No.~~

~~Cleveland Center: Thank You. United 93,
Cleveland.~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller: United 1523
did you hear your company, ah, did you
hear, ah, some interference on the
frequency, ah, couple a minutes ago,
screaming?~~

~~United 1523: Yes I did seven ninety
seven and, ah, we couldn't tell what it
was either.~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller: Okay.
United 93, Cleveland, if you hear the
center, ident.~~

~~AA1060: American 1060. Ditto on the
other transmissions.~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller: American
1060, you heard that also?~~

~~AA1060: Yes sir, twice.~~

~~Cleveland Center Controller: Roger, we
heard that also, thanks, just wanted to
confirm it wasn't some interference.~~

HOST

At 9:32 Ziad Jarrah, later identified as the leader of the four hijackers aboard United Ninety Three, apparently makes the same mistake as Mohamed Atta, leader of the five hijackers aboard American Eleven, when he communicates on an open radio channel instead of United Ninety Three's intercom.

~~SFX: ACTUALITY #88. UA93 BOMB ON BOARD~~

~~Ziad Jarrah: (Indistinct) please sit down and remain sitting. We have a bomb on board, so (indistinct).~~

~~Cleveland Center: Ah, calling Cleveland Center, you are unreadable, say again slowly.~~

~~SFX: ACTUALITY #8989. UA93 MOVES OTHER TRAFFIC~~

~~Unknown: Yeah, that transmission you said was unreadable, it sounded like someone said they had a bomb on board.~~

~~Cleveland Center: That's what we thought, we, ah, we didn't get it clear. Is that United 93 calling?~~

~~Medex150: Center, Medex 150.~~

~~Cleveland Center: Medex 150, ah, stand by if you would unless you got an emergency.~~

~~Medex 150: Standing by.~~

~~SFX: ACTUALITY #90. UA93 BOMB ON BOARD AND CONTROLLER FOLLOW-UP~~

~~Ziad Jarrah: This is the Captain. I would like you all to remain seated. We have a bomb on board and are going back to the airport and have our demands, so please remain quiet.~~

Cleveland Center: Okay, that's United 93 calling? United 93 understand you have a bomb on board, go ahead.

HOST

There is no further contact. ~~From that point, Air Traffic Control Strategic Command Center, in Herndon, Virginia, Cleveland Center, and the FAA collect and share information. We'll roll the tapes and let you listen.~~

~~SFX: ACTUALITY #93. UA93 ZOB
REPORTS BOMB ON BOARD~~

~~Cleveland Center: United 93 may have a bomb on board.~~

~~Herndon Center: Okay, United 93. Who's speaking?~~

~~Cleveland Center: Cleveland Center.~~

~~Herndon Center: Okay, Cleveland, what's his origination and destination?~~

~~[Background] Cleveland Center Unknown:
Out of Newark going to San Francisco.~~

~~Cleveland Center: Out of Newark going to San Francisco. His position is, twenty, fifteen east, actually he's further than that. He's east of Dryer. His exact position is 30 miles East of Dryer.~~

~~Herndon Center: Okay. You have a transponder on this aircraft or did he go primary?~~

~~Cleveland Center: At this time he's, ah,
code one five two seven, and we still
have a transponder.~~

~~Herndon Center: Okay, and can you give
me any additional information as to why
you believe there may be a bomb?~~

~~Cleveland Center: Ah, because he's
screaming that on the frequency.~~

~~Herndon Center: Okay, very good. Anyone
else? Alright, I'm disconnecting now.~~

**SFX: RADIO STATIC BED. ESTABLISH,
THEN DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING.**

HOST

In the interim, friends and relatives telephone passengers aboard United Ninety Three and tell them other airplanes have been hijacked and crashed.

Passengers storm the cockpit hoping to regain control of the aircraft. ~~The aircraft rocking its wings, as reported by Herndon Center, may have been an attempt by the hijacker pilot to discourage this passenger revolt.~~

SFX: RADIO STATIC, OUT.

HOST

At 10:03, United Ninety Three crashes near Stonycreek Township, Pennsylvania, killing all 4 hijackers, 7 crew, and 33 passengers.

Then, first reports suggest the fate of United Ninety Three.

Herndon Center: Okay. There is a report of black smoke in the last position I gave you, 15 miles south of Johnstown.

FAA HQ: Uh, from the airplane or from the ground?

Herndon Center: Uh, they're speculating it's from the aircraft, ah, who, it hit the ground. That's what they're, that's what they're speculating. It's speculation only.

FAA HQ: Okay.

THE RIR BREAK

MUSIC: RIR THEME, OPEN. ESTABLISH, THEN FADE OUT UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

HOST

This is Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber, producer and host. With each episode we explore radio storytelling using voice, sound effects, and music. Here are some examples . . .

SFX: RE-IMAGINED RADIO AUDIO

TRAILER

HOST

Future episodes include a lost episode from the *Dry Smoke & Whispers* series, a tribute to the *Dimension X* science fiction series, and Volume 4 of our annual Christmas sampler.

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MUSIC: RIR THEME, RETURN.

ESTABLISH, THEN DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING

CODA

HOST

GOFER Zero Six, piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Steven O'Brien, who earlier reported the crash of American Seventy Seven into the Pentagon in Washington, DC, continued its flight path to Minnesota. Crossing Western Pennsylvania, GOFER Zero Six was asked to look for United Ninety Three. O'Brien reported seeing black smoke rising from a field seventeen miles off the left side of his aircraft. This was the crash site of United Ninety Three. O'Brien and his crew witnessed two of the four airplane crashes of the 9/11 events.

MUSIC: SOLEMN TRANSITION

HOST CONCLUSION

HOST

This is Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "9/11 Radio Stories: Stories behind the Images."

On September 11, 2001, four passenger aircraft were hijacked and used as weapons. Images looped continuously on our television sets. ~~The twin towers of the World Trade Center burning and~~

~~crashing to the ground. The gaping hole in the side of Pentagon building in Washington, DC. The black smoke rising from a field in Pennsylvania.~~

Behind those images, air traffic controllers, airline officials, and federal agents tried to determine what was happening and how to respond. Their conversations were recorded. We used samples from those recordings as the storytellers for this episode.

Nearly 3,000 people died in the 9/11 events. Today, more than two decades later, countless people still suffer.

We dedicate this episode of Re-Imagined Radio to those who died and those who continue to suffer.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, ESTABLISH, THEN
DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING**

KXRW SHOUT OUT

HOST

Re-Imagined Radio is produced with support from KXRW-FM. Vancouver, Washington's community radio station. We appreciate their support. Whatever you can do to help them will be much appreciated. All donations are tax deductible.

HOST CREDITS AND CLOSE

HOST

We archive episodes at our website, reimagedradio DOT net. Podcasts are

available at the major platforms, or our website.

Content curation and script by John Barber.

Sound Design, music composition, and post-production by Marc Rose.

Graphic design by Holly Slocum.

Our announcer is Jack Armstrong.

This is John Barber, producer and host.
Thank you for listening.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, THEN DUCK
UNDER THE FOLLOWING**

ANNOUNCER CLOSE

ANNOUNCER

**This is a production of Re-Imagined
Radio. Our radio broadcasts are heard on
local, regional, and international
community radio stations.**

**For on demand streaming, point your
browsers to our website, reimagedradio
(all one word, no punctuation) DOT net.**

**Thank you so much for listening, and
please, join us again for another
episode of Re-Imagined Radio where we
will continue our exploration of radio
storytelling.**

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, AND TO END.

Sources

Transcript Source

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September 11 Attacks

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Stephen O'Brien Pilot of GOFOR 06

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