

1 “We Have Some Planes”

1. No physical, documentary, or analytical evidence provides a convincing explanation of why Atta and Omari drove to Portland, Maine, from Boston on the morning of September 10, only to return to Logan on Flight 5930 on the morning of September 11. However, Atta reacted negatively when informed in Portland that he would have to check in again in Boston. Michael Touhey interview (May 27, 2004). Whatever their reason, the Portland Jetport was the nearest airport to Boston with a 9/11 flight that would have arrived at Logan in time for the passengers to transfer to American Airlines Flight 11, which had a scheduled departure time of 7:45 A.M. See Tom Kinton interview (Nov. 6, 2003); Portland International Jetport site visit (Aug. 18, 2003).

Like the other two airports used by the 9/11 hijackers (Newark Liberty International Airport and Washington Dulles International Airport), Boston's Logan International Airport was a “Category X” airport: i.e., among the largest facilities liable to highest threat, and generally subject to greater security requirements. See FAA report, “Civil Aviation Security Reference Handbook,” May 1999, pp. 117–118. Though Logan was selected for two of the hijackings (as were both American and United Airlines), we found no evidence that the terrorists targeted particular airports or airlines. Nothing stands out about any of them with respect to the only security layer that was relevant to the actual hijackings: checkpoint screening. See FAA briefing materials, “Assessment and Testing Data for BOS, EWR, and IAD,” Oct. 24, 2001. Despite security problems at Logan (see, e.g., two local Fox 25 television investigative reports in February and April 2001, and an email in August 2001 from a former FAA special agent to the agency's leadership regarding his concerns about lax security at the airport), no evidence suggests that such issues entered into the terrorists' targeting; they simply booked heavily fueled east-to-west transcontinental flights of the large Boeing aircraft they trained to fly that were scheduled to take off at nearly the same time. See Matt Carroll, “Fighting Terror Sense of Alarm; Airlines Foiled Police Logan Probe,” *Boston Globe*, Oct. 17, 2001, p. B1.

2. CAPPS was an FAA-approved automated system run by the airlines that scored each passenger's profile to identify those who might pose a threat to civil aviation. The system also chose passengers at random to receive additional security scrutiny. Ten out of the 19 hijackers (including 9 out of 10 on the two American Airlines flights) were identified via the CAPPS system. According to the procedures in place on 9/11, in addition to those flagged by the CAPPS algorithm, American's ticket agents were to mark as “selectees” those passengers who did not provide correct responses to the required security questions, failed to show proper identification, or met other criteria. See FAA report, “Air Carrier Standard Security Program,” May 2001, pp. 75–76; FAA record of interview, Donna Thompson, Sept. 23, 2001; Chuck Severance interview (Apr. 15, 2004); Jim Dillon interview (Apr. 15, 2004); Diane Graney interview (Apr. 16, 2004). It appears that Atta was selected at random. See Al Hickson briefing (June 8, 2004).

3. The call was placed from a pay phone in Terminal C (between the screening checkpoint and United 175's boarding gate). We presume Shehri made the call, but we cannot be sure. Logan International Airport site visit (Aug. 15, 2003); see also FBI response to Commission briefing request no. 6, undated (topic 11).

4. Flight 11 pushed back from Gate 32 in Terminal B at 7:40. See AAL response to the Commission's February 3, 2004, requests, Mar. 15, 2004.

5. See UAL letter, “Flight 175—11Sep01 Passenger ACI Check-in History,” July 11, 2002. Customer service representative Gail Jawahir recalled that her encounter with the Ghamdis occurred at “shortly before 7 A.M.,” and when shown photos of the hijackers, she indicated that Mohand al Shehri resembled one of the two she checked in (suggesting they were Banihammad and Shehri). However, she also recalled that the men had the same last name and had assigned seats on row 9 (i.e., the Ghamdis), and that account has been adopted here. In either case, she almost certainly was dealing with one set of the Flight 175 hijackers. See FBI reports of investigation, interviews of Gail Jawahir, Sept. 21, 2001; Sept. 28, 2001. Even had the hijackers been unable to understand and answer the two standard security questions, the only consequence would have been the screening of their carry-on and checked bags for explosives. See FAA report, “Air Carrier Standard Security Program,” May 2001, p. 76.

6. For Flight 11, two checkpoints provided access to the gate. The second was opened at 7:15 A.M. The FAA conducted many screener evaluations between September 11, 1999, and September 11, 2001. At the primary checkpoints, in aggregate, screeners met or exceeded the average for overall, physical search, and X-ray detection, while falling below the norm for metal detection. No FAA Special Assessments (by “red teams”) were done at Logan security checkpoints during the two years prior to September 11, 2001. See FAA briefing materials, “Assessment and Testing Data for BOS, EWR, and IAD,” Oct. 24, 2001.

7. See Air Transport Association/Regional Airlines Association (ATA/RAA) report, “Air Carriers Checkpoint Operations Guide,” Aug. 1999; FAA report, “Air Carrier Standard Security Program,” May 2001, appendix VI.

8. Mary Carol Turano interview (Mar. 11, 2004); FBI reports of investigation, interview of Nilda Cora, Oct. 4, 2001; interview of William Thomas, Sept. 14, 2001; interview of Jennifer Gore, Sept. 12, 2001; interview of Claudia Richey, Sept. 15, 2001; interview of Rosarito Rivera, Sept. 25, 2001.

9. See TSA report, “Selectee Status of September 11th Hijackers,” undated. For boarding and seating information, see AAL record, SABRE information on Flight 11, Sept. 11, 2001. These boarding times from the American system are approximate only; for Flight 11, they indicated that some passengers “boarded” after the aircraft had pushed back from the gate. See AAL response to the Commission's February 3, 2004, requests, Mar. 15, 2004.