

Summary

Monday, September 13, 2021 7:54 PM

September 11 attacks, also called **9/11 attacks**, series of [airline hijackings](#) and suicide attacks committed in 2001 by 19 militants associated with the Islamic extremist group [al-Qaeda](#) against targets in the [United States](#), the deadliest terrorist attacks on American soil in U.S. history. The attacks against [New York City](#) and [Washington, D.C.](#), caused extensive death and destruction and triggered an enormous U.S. effort to combat [terrorism](#). Some 2,750 people were killed in New York, 184 at the [Pentagon](#), and 40 in [Pennsylvania](#) (where one of the hijacked planes crashed after the passengers attempted to retake the plane); all 19 terrorists died (see [Researcher's Note: September 11 attacks](#)). Police and fire departments in New York were especially hard-hit: hundreds had rushed to the scene of the attacks, and more than 400 police officers and firefighters were killed.



September 11 attacks

Hijacked airliner approaching the south tower of the World Trade Center.
Carmen Taylor/AP Images



September 11 attacks: Pentagon

Fire and smoke billowing from the Pentagon after hijackers crashed American Airlines flight 77 into the building during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Arlington, Virginia.
Cpl. Jason Ingersoll, USMC/U.S. Department of Defense



September 11 attacks: United Airlines flight 93

Part of the wreckage of United Airlines flight 93. The airplane was crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia (U.S. v. Moussaoui)

The plot

The September 11 attacks were precipitated in large part because [Osama bin Laden](#), the leader of the militant Islamic organization [al-Qaeda](#), held naive beliefs about the United States in the run-up to the attacks. Abu Walid al-Masri, an Egyptian who was a bin Laden associate in [Afghanistan](#) in the 1980s and '90s, explained that, in the years prior to the attacks, bin Laden became increasingly convinced that America was weak. "He believed that the United States was much weaker than some of those around him thought," Masri remembered, and "as evidence he referred to what happened to the United States in [Beirut](#) when the bombing of the [Marines](#) base led them to flee from [Lebanon](#)," referring to the destruction of the marine barracks there in 1983 (see [1983 Beirut barracks bombings](#)), which killed 241 American servicemen. Bin Laden believed that the United States was a "paper tiger," a belief shaped not just by America's departure from Lebanon following the marine barracks bombing but also by the withdrawal of American forces from [Somalia](#) in 1993, following the deaths of 18 U.S. servicemen in [Mogadishu](#), and the American pullout from [Vietnam](#) in the 1970s.

The key operational planner of the September 11 attacks was [Khalid Sheikh Mohammed](#) (often referred to simply as "KSM" in the later *9/11 Commission Report* and in the media), who had spent his youth in [Kuwait](#). Khalid Sheikh Mohammed became active in the [Muslim Brotherhood](#), which he joined at age 16, and then he went to the United States to attend college, receiving a degree from [North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University](#) in 1986. Afterward he traveled to [Pakistan](#) and then Afghanistan to wage [jihad](#) against the [Soviet Union](#), which had [launched an invasion](#) against Afghanistan in 1979.



Khalid Sheikh Mohammed

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia (U.S. v. Moussaoui)

According to Yosri Fouda, a journalist at the [Arabic-language cable television](#) channel [Al Jazeera](#) who interviewed him in 2002, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed planned to blow up some dozen American [planes](#) in [Asia](#) during the mid-1990s, a plot (known as “[Bojinka](#)”) that failed, “but the dream of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed never faded. And I think by putting his hand in the hands of bin Laden, he realized that now he stood a chance of bringing about his long awaited dream.”

In 1996 Khalid Sheikh Mohammed met bin Laden in Tora Bora, Afghanistan. The [9-11 Commission](#) (formally the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States), set up in 2002 by Pres. [George W. Bush](#) and the [U.S. Congress](#) to investigate the attacks of 2001, explained that it was then that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed “presented a proposal for an operation that would involve training pilots who would crash planes into buildings in the United States.” Khalid Sheikh Mohammed dreamed up the tactical [innovation](#) of using hijacked planes to attack the United States, al-Qaeda provided the personnel, money, and logistical support to execute the operation, and bin Laden wove the attacks on New York and Washington into a larger strategic framework of attacking the “far enemy”—the United States—in order to bring about regime change across the [Middle East](#).

The September 11 plot demonstrated that al-Qaeda was an organization of global reach. The plot played out across the globe with planning meetings in [Malaysia](#), operatives taking flight lessons in the United States, coordination by plot leaders based in [Hamburg, Germany](#), money transfers from [Dubai](#), and recruitment of suicide operatives from countries around the Middle East—all activities that were ultimately overseen by al-Qaeda’s leaders in Afghanistan.



Hear about Mohammed Atta, the lead perpetrator behind the September 11 attacks of 2001, and Sebastian Gorki, a German banker and one of the victims killed in the World Trade Center, New York

Discussion of Mohammed Atta, lead hijacker in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and German banker Sebastian Gorki, one of the victims killed in the World Trade Center, New York.

Continuo © ZDF Enterprises GmbH, Mainz [See all videos for this article](#)

Key parts of the September 11 plot took shape in Hamburg. Four of the key pilots and planners in the “Hamburg cell” who would take operational control of the September 11 attacks, including the lead hijacker [Mohammed Atta](#), had a chance meeting on a train in [Germany](#) in 1999 with an Islamist militant who struck up a conversation with them about fighting jihad in the Russian republic of [Chechnya](#). The militant put the Hamburg cell in touch with an al-Qaeda operative living in Germany who explained that it was difficult to get to Chechnya at that time because many travelers were being detained in [Georgia](#). He recommended they go to Afghanistan instead.



Mohammed Atta

Florida driver's license photo of Mohammed Atta.
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia (U.S. v. Moussaoui)

Although Afghanistan was critical to the rise of al-Qaeda, it was the experience that some of the plotters acquired in the West that made them simultaneously more [zealous](#) and better equipped to carry out the attacks. Three of the four plotters who would pilot the hijacked planes on September 11 and one of the key planners, Ramzi Binalshibh, became more radical while living in [Hamburg](#). Some combination of perceived or real [discrimination](#), alienation, and homesickness seems to have turned them all in a more militant direction. Increasingly cutting themselves off from the outside world, they gradually radicalized each other, and eventually the friends decided to wage battle in bin Laden’s global jihad, setting off for Afghanistan in 1999 in search of al-Qaeda.

Atta and the other members of the Hamburg group arrived in Afghanistan in 1999 right at the moment that the September 11 plot was beginning to take shape. Bin Laden and his military commander Muhammad Atef realized that Atta and his fellow Western-educated jihadists were far better suited to lead the attacks on Washington and New York than the men they had already recruited, leading bin Laden to appoint Atta to head the operation.

The hijackers, most of whom were from [Saudi Arabia](#), established themselves in the United States, many well in advance of the attacks. They traveled in small groups, and some of them received commercial flight training.

Throughout his stay in the United States, Atta kept Binalshibh updated on the plot's progress via [e-mail](#). To cloak his activities, Atta wrote the messages as if he were writing to his girlfriend "Jenny," using [innocuous](#) code to inform Binalshibh that they were almost complete in their training and readiness for the attacks. Atta wrote in one message, "The first semester commences in three weeks...Nineteen certificates for private education and four exams." The referenced 19 "certificates" were code that identified the 19 al-Qaeda hijackers, while the four "exams" identified the targets of the attacks.

In the early morning of [August](#) 29, 2001, Atta called Binalshibh and said he had a riddle that he was trying to solve: "Two sticks, a dash and a cake with a stick down—what is it?" After considering the question, Binalshibh realized that Atta was telling him that the attacks would occur in two weeks—the two sticks being the number 11 and the cake with a stick down a 9. Putting it together, it meant that the attacks would occur on 11-9, or 11 September (in most countries the day precedes the month in numeric dates, but in the United States the month precedes the day; hence, it was 9-11 in the United States). On September 5 Binalshibh left Germany for [Pakistan](#). Once there he sent a messenger to Afghanistan to inform bin Laden about both the day of the attack and its scope.

The attacks

On September 11, 2001, groups of attackers boarded four domestic aircraft at three East Coast airports, and soon after takeoff they disabled the crews, some of whom may have been stabbed with box cutters the hijackers were secreting. The hijackers then took control of the aircraft, all large and bound for the West Coast with full loads of fuel. At 8:46 AM the first plane, American Airlines flight 11, which had originated from [Boston](#), was piloted into the north tower of the [World Trade Center](#) in [New York City](#). Most observers construed this initially to be an accident involving a small commuter plane. The second plane, [United Airlines](#) flight 175, also from Boston, struck the south tower 17 minutes later. At this point there was no doubt that the [United States](#) was under attack. Each structure was badly damaged by the impact and erupted into flames. Office workers who were trapped above the points of impact in some cases leapt to their deaths rather than face the infernos now raging inside the towers. The third plane, [American Airlines flight 77](#), taking off from Dulles Airport near [Washington, D.C.](#), struck the southwest side of the [Pentagon](#) (just outside the city) at 9:37 AM, touching off a fire in that section of the structure. Minutes later the Federal Aviation Authority ordered a nationwide ground stop, and within the next hour (at 10:03 AM) the fourth aircraft, United Airlines flight 93 from [Newark, New Jersey](#), crashed near [Shanksville](#) in the [Pennsylvania](#) countryside after its passengers—informed of events via cellular phone—attempted to overpower their assailants.



[September 11 attacks: Mohammed Atta](#)

Photograph from a security camera at the Portland, Maine, airport showing lead hijacker Mohammed Atta passing through a security checkpoint at 5:53 AM on the morning of September 11, 2001. *United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia (U.S. v. Moussaoui)*



[September 11 attacks](#)

Smoke and flames erupting from the twin towers of New York City's World Trade Center after the attacks on September 11, 2001; both towers subsequently collapsed. *Spencer Platt/Getty Images*



[September 11 attacks](#)

Aerial photograph of the destruction following the crash of a hijacked plane into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. *Tech. Sgt. Cedric H. Rudisill/U.S. Department of Defense*



September 11 attacks: United Airlines flight 93, Pennsylvania

Wreckage of United Airlines flight 93, which was crashed during the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia (U.S. v. Moussaoui)

At 9:59 AM the World Trade Center's heavily damaged south tower collapsed, and the north tower fell 29 minutes later. Clouds of smoke and debris quickly filled the streets of Lower Manhattan. Office workers and residents ran in panic as they tried to outpace the billowing debris clouds. A number of other buildings [adjacent](#) to the twin towers suffered serious damage, and several subsequently fell. Fires at the World Trade Center site smoldered for more than three months.



September 11 attacks

Smoke and flames erupting from the twin towers of New York City's World Trade Center after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001; both towers subsequently collapsed.
Chao Soi Cheong/AP



September 11 attacks

Smoke billowing from the burning World Trade Center site following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, New York City.
Courtesy of the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

Rescue operations began almost immediately as the country and the world sought to come to grips with the enormity of the losses. Nearly 3,000 people had perished: some 2,750 people in New York, 184 at the Pentagon, and 40 in Pennsylvania; all 19 terrorists also died. Included in the total in New York City were more than 400 police officers and firefighters, who had lost their lives after rushing to the scene and into the towers.



September 11 attacks: rescue operation

Man, covered in ash, assisting a woman holding a particle mask to her face as they walk in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, New York City.
Don Halasy/Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (ppmsca.01811)



September 11 attacks: rescue operation

Firefighter calling for 10 additional rescue workers to make their way into the rubble of the World Trade Center in New York City following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
Jo1 Preston Keres/U.S. Navy

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On the morning of September 11, President [Bush](#) had been visiting a second-grade classroom in [Sarasota, Florida](#), when he was informed that a plane had flown into the World Trade Center. A little later Andrew Card, his chief of staff, whispered in the president's right ear: "A second plane hit the second tower. America is under attack." To keep the president out of harm's way, Bush subsequently hopped across the country on [Air Force One](#), landing in Washington, D.C., the evening of the attacks. At 8:30 PM Bush addressed the nation from the Oval Office in a speech that laid out a key doctrine of his administration's future foreign policy: "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them."



George W. Bush on Air Force One after the September 11 attacks

U.S. Pres. George W. Bush conferring with his chief of staff aboard Air Force One, September 11, 2001.
Eric Draper/The White House



September 11 attacks: George W. Bush

U.S. Pres. George W. Bush conferring with Vice Pres. Dick Cheney from Air Force One en route from Nebraska to Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, September 11, 2001.
Eric Draper/The White House



[George W. Bush: speech after the September 11, 2001, attacks](#)

U.S. Pres. George W. Bush addressing the country from the Oval Office on September 11, 2001.

Eric Draper/The White House



[September 11 attacks](#)

U.S. Vice Pres. Dick Cheney talking on the phone with Pres. George W. Bush as National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice (seated) and other senior staff listen at the Presidential Emergency Operations Center, September 11, 2001.

Eric Draper/The White House

On September 14 Bush visited “Ground Zero,” the smoking pile of debris of what remained of the World Trade Center and the thousands who had perished there. Standing on top of a wrecked [fire truck](#), Bush grabbed a bullhorn to address the rescue workers working feverishly to find any survivors. When one of the workers said that he could not hear what the president was saying, Bush made one of the most memorable remarks of his presidency:



[George W. Bush at the World Trade Center](#)

U.S. Pres. George W. Bush addressing a crowd as he stands on rubble at the World Trade Center site in New York City three days after the September 11 attacks of 2001.

Eric Draper/The White House

I can hear you. The rest of the world hears you. And the people who knocked these buildings down will hear from all of us soon.

Bush’s [robust](#) response to the attacks drove his poll ratings from 55 percent favourable before September 11 to 90 percent in the days after, the highest ever recorded for a president.

The aftermath

The emotional distress caused by the attacks—particularly the collapse of the twin towers, New York City’s most visible landmark—was overwhelming. Unlike the relatively isolated site of the [Pearl Harbor attack](#) of 1941, to which the September 11 events were soon compared, the World Trade Center lay at the heart of one of the world’s largest cities. Hundreds of thousands of people witnessed the attacks firsthand (many onlookers photographed events or recorded them with video cameras), and millions watched the tragedy unfold live on [television](#). In the days that followed September 11, the footage of the attacks was replayed in the media countless times, as were the scenes of throngs of people, stricken with grief, gathering at “Ground Zero”—as the site where the towers once stood came to be commonly known—some with photos of missing loved ones, seeking some hint of their fate.



Remember New York City's World Trade Center towers and the September 11 attacks

September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center in New York City remembered.

Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. [See all videos for this article](#)

Moreover, world [markets](#) were badly shaken. The towers were at the heart of New York's financial district, and damage to Lower Manhattan's [infrastructure](#), combined with fears of [stock market](#) panic, kept New York markets closed for four trading days. Markets afterward suffered record losses. The attacks also stranded tens of thousands of people throughout the United States, as U.S. airspace remained closed for commercial aviation until September 13, and normal service, with more rigid security measures, did not resume for several days.



Know how the AT&T Corporation managed the telecommunication traffic right after the attacks of September 11, 2001

A discussion of how the AT&T Corporation coped with the massive increase in telecommunication traffic that immediately followed the attacks of September 11, 2001.

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The September 11 attacks were an enormous tactical success for [al-Qaeda](#). The strikes were well coordinated and hit multiple targets in the heart of the enemy, and the attacks were magnified by being broadcast around the world to an audience of untold millions. The September 11 "propaganda of the deed" took place in the media capital of the world, which ensured the widest possible coverage of the event. Not since television viewers had watched the abduction and murder of Israeli athletes during the [Munich Olympics in 1972](#) had a massive global audience witnessed a terrorist attack unfold in real time. If al-Qaeda had been a largely unknown organization before September 11, in the days after it became a household name.

After the attacks of September 11, countries allied with the United States rallied to its support, perhaps best symbolized by the French newspaper [Le Monde](#)'s headline, "We are all Americans now." Even in [Iran](#) thousands gathered in the capital, [Tehran](#), for a candlelight vigil.

Evidence gathered by the United States soon convinced most governments that the Islamic militant group al-Qaeda was responsible for the attacks. The group had been implicated in previous terrorist strikes against Americans, and bin Laden had made numerous anti-American statements. Al-Qaeda was headquartered in [Afghanistan](#) and had forged a close relationship with that country's ruling [Taliban](#) militia, which subsequently refused U.S. demands to extradite bin Laden and to terminate al-Qaeda activity there.

For the first time in its history, the [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#) (NATO) [invoked](#) Article 5, allowing its members to respond collectively in self-defense, and on October 7 the U.S. and allied military forces launched an attack against Afghanistan (see [Afghanistan War](#)). Within months thousands of militants were killed or captured, and Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders were driven into hiding. In addition, the U.S. government exerted great effort to track down other al-Qaeda agents and sympathizers throughout the world and made combating [terrorism](#) the focus of U.S. [foreign policy](#). Meanwhile, security measures within the United States were tightened considerably at such places as [airports](#), government buildings, and sports [venues](#). To help [facilitate](#) the domestic response, Congress quickly passed the [USA PATRIOT Act](#) (the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001), which significantly but temporarily expanded the search and surveillance powers of the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#) (FBI) and other law-enforcement agencies. Additionally, a cabinet-level [Department of Homeland Security](#) was established.

Despite their success in causing widespread destruction and death, the September 11 attacks were a strategic failure for al-Qaeda. Following September 11, al-Qaeda—whose name in Arabic means "the base"—lost the best base it ever had in Afghanistan. Later some in al-Qaeda's leadership—including those who, like Egyptian [Saif al-Adel](#), had initially opposed the attacks—tried to spin the Western intervention in Afghanistan as a victory for al-Qaeda. Al-Adel, one of the group's military commanders, explained in an interview four years later that the strikes on New York and Washington were part of a far-reaching and visionary plan to provoke the United States into some ill-advised actions:

Such strikes will force the person to carry out random acts and provoke him to make serious and sometimes fatal mistakes....The first reaction was the invasion of Afghanistan.

But there is not a shred of evidence that in the weeks before September 11 al-Qaeda's leaders made any plans for an American invasion of Afghanistan. Instead, they prepared only for possible U.S. [cruise missile](#) attacks or air strikes by evacuating their training camps. Also, the overthrow of the Taliban hardly [constituted](#) an American "mistake"—the first and only regime in the modern [Muslim world](#) that ruled according to al-Qaeda's rigid precepts was toppled, and with it was lost an entire country that al-Qaeda had once enjoyed as a safe haven. And in the wake of the fall of the Taliban, al-Qaeda was unable to recover anything like the status it once had as a terrorist organization with considerable sway over Afghanistan.

Bin Laden disastrously misjudged the possible U.S. responses to the September 11 attacks, which he believed would take one of two forms: an eventual retreat from the [Middle East](#) along the lines of the U.S. pullout from [Somalia](#) in 1993 or another ineffectual round of cruise missile attacks similar to those that followed al-Qaeda's bombings of American embassies in [Kenya](#) and [Tanzania](#) in 1998. Neither of these two scenarios happened. The U.S. campaign against the Taliban was conducted with pinpoint strikes from American airpower, tens of thousands of Northern Alliance forces (a loose [coalition](#) of [mujahideen](#) militias that maintained control of a small section of northern Afghanistan), and more than 300 U.S. [Special Forces](#) soldiers on the ground working with 110 officers from the [Central Intelligence Agency](#) (CIA). In November, just two months after the September 11 attacks, the Taliban fell to the Northern Alliance and the United States. Still, it was just the beginning of what would become the longest war in U.S. history, as the United States tried to prevent the return of the Taliban and their al-Qaeda allies.

In December 2001, faced with the problem of where to house prisoners as the Taliban fell, the administration decided to hold them at [Guantánamo Bay](#), which the U.S. had been leasing from [Cuba](#) since 1903. As Secretary of Defense [Donald Rumsfeld](#) put it on December 27, 2001, "I would characterize [Guantánamo Bay](#), Cuba, as the least worst place we could have selected." Guantánamo was attractive to administration officials because they believed it placed the detainees outside the reach of American laws, such as the right to appeal their imprisonment, yet it was only 90 miles (145 km) off the coast of [Florida](#), making it accessible to the various agencies that would need to travel there to extract information from what was believed to be a population of hundreds of dangerous terrorists. Eventually, some 800 prisoners would be held there, although the prison population was reduced to less than 175 by the time of the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

In his [State of the Union](#) speech on January 29, 2002, President Bush laid out a new doctrine of preemptive war, which went well beyond the long-established principle that the United States would go to war to prevent an adversary launching an attack that imminently threatened the country. Bush declared:

I will not wait on events while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.

Bush identified those dangerous regimes as an "axis of evil" that included [Iran](#), [Iraq](#), and [North Korea](#). At the graduation ceremony for [West Point](#) cadets on June 1, 2002, Bush elaborated on his preemptive war doctrine, saying to the assembled soon-to-be graduates and their families, "If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long." Bush believed that there would be a "demonstration effect" in destroying [Saddam Hussein's](#) regime in Iraq that would deter groups like al-Qaeda or indeed anyone else who might be inclined to attack the United States. Undersecretary of Defense Douglas J. Feith later explained,

What we did after 9/11 was look broadly at the international terrorist network from which the next attack on the United States might come. And we did not focus narrowly only on the people who were specifically responsible for 9/11. Our main goal was preventing the next attack.

Thus, though there was no evidence that Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq had [collaborated](#) with al-Qaeda in the September 11 attacks, the United States prepared for conflict against Iraq in its global war against terror, broadly defined.

On March 19, 2003, on the eve of the invasion of Iraq, President Bush issued the order for war:

For the peace of the world and the benefit and freedom of the Iraqi people, I hereby give the order to execute [Operation Iraqi Freedom](#). May God bless the troops.

On March 20 the [American-led invasion of Iraq](#) began. Within three weeks U.S. forces controlled [Baghdad](#), and the famous pictures of the massive statue of Saddam Hussein being toppled from its plinth were broadcast around the world.

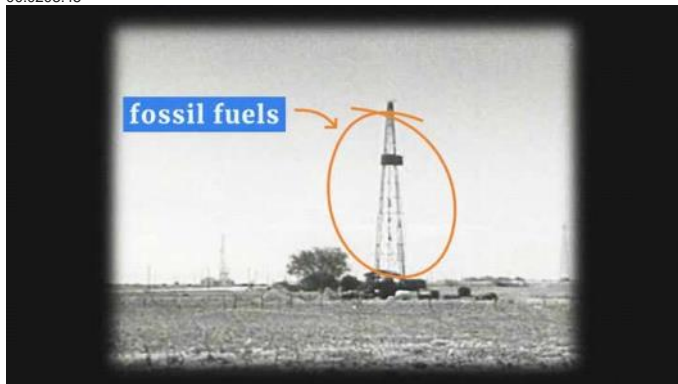
The [September 11 commission](#) and its findings

In 2002 President Bush had appointed a commission to look into the September 11 attacks, and two years later it issued its final report. The commission found that the key pre-September 11 failure at the [CIA](#) was its not adding to the [State Department's](#) "watch list" two of the "muscle" hijackers (who were trained to restrain the passengers on the plane), the suspected [al-Qaeda](#) militants Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdhar. The CIA had been tracking Hazmi and Mihdhar since they attended a terrorist summit meeting in [Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia](#), on January 5, 2000. The failure to watch-list the two al-Qaeda suspects with the Department of State meant that they entered the United States under their real names with ease. On January 15, 2000, 10 days after the Malaysian meeting, Hazmi and Mihdhar flew into [Los Angeles](#). The CIA also did not alert the FBI about the identities of the suspected terrorists, which could have helped the bureau locate them once they were inside the United States. According to the commission, this was the failure of not just a few employees at the CIA but a large number of CIA officers and analysts. Some 50 to 60 CIA employees read cables about the two al-Qaeda suspects without taking any action. Some of those officers knew that one of the al-Qaeda suspects had a visa for the United States, and by May 2001 some knew that the other suspect had flown to Los Angeles.

The soon-to-be hijackers would not have been difficult to find in [California](#) if their names had been known to law enforcement. Under their real names they rented an apartment, obtained driver's licenses, opened bank accounts, purchased a [car](#), and took flight lessons at a local school; Mihdhar even listed his name in the local phone directory.

It was only on [August 24, 2001](#), as a result of questions raised by a CIA officer on assignment at the [FBI](#), that the two al-Qaeda suspects were watch-listed and their names communicated to the FBI. Even then the FBI sent out only a "Routine" notice requesting an investigation of Mihdhar. A few weeks later Hazmi and Mihdhar were two of the hijackers on the [American Airlines flight that plunged into the Pentagon](#).

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The CIA inspector general concluded that "informing the FBI and good operational follow-through by CIA and FBI might have resulted in surveillance of both al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi. Surveillance, in turn, would have had the potential to yield information on flight training, financing, and links to others who were [complicit](#) in the 9/11 attacks."

The key failure at the FBI was the handling of the Zacarias Moussaoui case. Moussaoui, a French citizen of Moroccan descent, was attending flight school in the summer of 2001 in [Minnesota](#), where he attracted attention from instructors because he had little knowledge of flying and did not behave like a typical aviation student. The flight school contacted the FBI, and on August 16 Moussaoui was arrested on a visa overstay charge. Although Moussaoui was not the "20th hijacker," as was widely reported later, he had received money from one of the September 11 coordinators, Ramzi Binalshibh, and by his own account was going to take part in a second wave of al-Qaeda attacks following the assaults on [New York](#) and Washington.

The FBI agent in [Minneapolis](#) who handled Moussaoui's case believed that he might have been planning to hijack a [plane](#), and the agent was also concerned that Moussaoui had traveled to [Pakistan](#), which was a red flag as militants often used the country as a transit point to travel to terrorist training camps in [Afghanistan](#). On August 23 (or 24, according to some reports) CIA director George Tenet was told about the case in a briefing titled "Islamic Extremist Learns to Fly." But FBI headquarters determined that there was not sufficient "probable cause" of a crime for the Minneapolis office to conduct a search of Moussaoui's computer hard drive and belongings. Such a search would have turned up his connection to Binalshibh, according to Republican Sen. [Charles Grassley](#), a leading member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which has oversight of the FBI. The 9-11 Commission also concluded that "a maximum U.S. effort to investigate Moussaoui conceivably could have unearthed his connection to Binalshibh."

The hunt for [bin Laden](#)

In September 2001 President [Bush](#) announced that he wanted [Osama bin Laden](#) captured—dead or alive—and a \$25 million bounty was eventually issued for information leading to the killing or capture of bin Laden. Bin Laden evaded capture, however, including in December 2001, when he was tracked by U.S. forces to the mountains of Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan. Bin Laden's trail subsequently went cold, and he was thought to be living somewhere in the Afghanistan-Pakistan tribal regions.

U.S. intelligence eventually located him in Pakistan, living in the garrison city of [Abbottabad](#), and in the early morning hours of May 2, 2011, on orders from U.S. Pres. [Barack Obama](#), a small team of U.S. [Navy SEALs](#) assaulted his [compound](#) and shot and killed the al-Qaeda leader.

From <<https://www.britannica.com/event/September-11-attacks/The-September-11-commission-and-its-findings>>

Insider Traders

Monday, September 13, 2021 9:04 PM

Insider Traders Knew About Attacks Before They Happened

Right before the September 11th attacks, some fishy business happened within the stock market and insurance firms. An "extraordinary" amount of put options were placed on [United Airlines](#) and American Airlines stocks, the same airlines that were hijacked during the attacks. Many speculate that traders were tipped off about the attacks and profited from the tragedy. The **Securities and Exchange Commission** launched an insider trading investigation in which [Osama bin Laden](#) was a suspect, after receiving information from at least one Wall Street firm.

From <<https://newsone.com/742485/the-11-most-compelling-911-conspiracy-theories/>>

Insider traders knew about the attacks

In the days preceding the attacks, an 'extraordinary' amount of put options (investments that pay off only when a stock drops in price) were placed on the stocks of two airlines – American and United, which happened to be the airlines hijacked during 9/11. As such, some theorists believe that traders had been given advance warning of the attacks and were cashing in on the tragedy.

From <<https://www.history.co.uk/shows/road-to-911/5-compelling-9-11-conspiracy-theories>>

Suspected insider trading

Some conspiracy theorists maintain that just before 9/11, an "extraordinary" amount of [put options](#) were placed on [United Airlines](#) and [American Airlines](#) stocks and speculate that insiders may have known in advance of the coming events of 9/11 and placed their bets accordingly. An analysis into the possibility of [insider trading](#) on 9/11 concludes that: "A measure of abnormal long put volume was also examined and seen to be at abnormally high levels in the days leading up to the attacks. Consequently, the paper concludes that there is evidence of unusual option market activity in the days leading up to September 11 that is consistent with investors trading on advance knowledge of the attacks."^[a] — Allen M. Potesman, [The Journal of Business](#)

This study was intended to address the "great deal of speculation about whether option market activity indicated that the terrorists or their associates had traded in the days leading up to September 11 on advance knowledge of the impending attacks."^[a] In the days leading up to 9/11, analysis shows a rise in the put to call ratio for United Airlines and American Airlines, the two airlines from which planes were hijacked on 9/11. Between September 6 and 7, the [Chicago Board Options Exchange](#) recorded purchases of 4,744 "put" option contracts in UAL and 396 call options. On September 10, more trading in Chicago saw the purchase of 4,516 put options in American Airlines, the other airline involved in the hijackings, with a mere 748 call options in American purchased that day. No other airline companies had an unusual put to call ratio in the days leading up to the attacks.^[a] The 9/11 Commission concluded that all these abnormal patterns in trading were coincidental.^[a] Insurance companies saw anomalous trading activities as well. [Citigroup Inc.](#), which has estimated that its [Travelers Insurance](#) unit may pay \$500 million in claims from the World Trade Center attack, had about 45 times the normal volume during three trading days before the attack for options that profit, if the stock falls below \$40. Citigroup shares fell \$1.25 in late trading to \$38.09. [Morgan Stanley](#), which occupied 22 floors at the World Trade Center, experienced bigger-than-normal pre-attack trading of options that profited when stock prices fell. Other companies directly affected by the tragedy had similar jumps.^[a] [Raytheon](#), a defense contractor, had an anomalously high number of call options trading on September 10. A Raytheon option that makes money, if shares are more than \$25 each had 232 options contracts traded on the day before the attacks, almost six times the total number of trades that had occurred before that day.^[a]^[citations needed]

The initial options were bought through at least two [brokerage firms](#), including [NFS](#), a subsidiary of [Fidelity Investments](#), and [TD Waterhouse](#). It was estimated that the trader or traders would have realized a five million dollar profit. The [Securities and Exchange Commission](#) launched an [insider trading](#) investigation in which [Osama bin Laden](#) was a suspect after receiving information from at least one Wall Street firm.^[a]

The [9/11 Commission Report](#) concluded that "Exhaustive investigations by the Securities and Exchange Commission, FBI, and other agencies have uncovered no evidence that anyone with advance knowledge of the attacks profited through securities transactions."^[a] The report further stated:

Highly publicized allegations of insider trading in advance of 9/11 generally rest on reports of unusual pre-9/11 trading activity in companies whose stock plummeted after the attacks. Some unusual trading did in fact occur, but each such trade proved to have an innocuous explanation. For example, the volume of put options — investments that pay off only when a stock drops in price — surged in the parent companies of United Airlines on September 6 and American Airlines on September 10 — highly suspicious trading on its face. Yet, further investigation has revealed that the trading had no connection with 9/11. A single U.S.-based institutional investor with no conceivable ties to al Qaeda purchased 95 percent of the UAL puts on September 6 as part of a trading strategy that also included buying 115,000 shares of American on September 10. Similarly, much of the seemingly suspicious trading in American on September 10 was traced to a specific U.S.-based options trading newsletter, faxed to its subscribers on Sunday, September 9, which recommended these trades. These examples typify the evidence examined by the investigation. The SEC and the FBI, aided by other agencies and the securities industry, devoted enormous resources to investigating this issue, including securing the cooperation of many foreign governments. These investigators have found that the apparently suspicious consistently proved innocuous.^[a]

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11_conspiracy_theories#Suspected_insider_trading>

Air Defence

Monday, September 13, 2021 9:05 PM

Air Defense Was Told To 'Stand Down'

In the event that an airplane is hijacked, the [North American Aerospace Defense Command](#) (NORAD) is prepared to send out fighter jets, which can debilitate or shoot down the aircraft. On [9/11/01](#), NORAD generals said they learned of the hijackings in time to scramble fighter jets. Some skeptics believe NORAD commanded defense systems to "stand down," because of their lack of presence during the attacks.

From <<https://newsone.com/742485/the-11-most-compelling-911-conspiracy-theories/>>

The United States government knew about the attacks and stood the military down

A common belief amongst 'truthers' is that the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) deliberately ordered their fighter jets to stand down and allow the hijacked planes to reach their targets. America seemingly had the most powerful air force in the world but failed to intercept any of the planes that day, which theorists believe is an indication of a government conspiracy to let the attacks go ahead. Why would they do such a thing? Conspiracy theorists believe that the government wanted to [use the attacks to justify an invasion on Iraq and Afghanistan to secure oil interests.](#)

From <<https://www.history.co.uk/shows/road-to-911/5-compelling-9-11-conspiracy-theories>>

Air-defense stand-down theory

A common claim among conspiracy theorists is that the [North American Aerospace Defense Command](#) (NORAD) [issued a stand down order or deliberately scrambled fighters late to allow the hijacked airplanes to reach their targets without interference.](#) According to this theory, NORAD had the capability of locating and intercepting planes on 9/11, and its failure to do so indicates a government conspiracy to allow the attacks to occur.^[a] Conspiracy theorist Mark R. Elsis says: "[There is only one explanation for this ... Our Air Force was ordered to Stand Down on 9/11.](#)"^{[a][b]} One of the first actions taken by the hijackers on 9/11 was to turn off or disable each of the four aircraft's on board transponders. Without these transponder signals to identify the airplane's tail number, altitude, and speed, the hijacked airplanes would have been only blips among 4,500 other blips on NORAD's radar screens, making them very difficult to track.^{[a][c]} On 9/11, only 14 fighter jets were on alert in the contiguous 48 states. There was no automated method for the civilian air traffic controllers to alert NORAD.^[a] A passenger aircraft had not been hijacked in the U.S. since 1979.^[a] "[They had to pick up the phone and literally dial us,](#)" says Maj. Douglas Martin, public affairs officer for NORAD. Only one civilian plane—a [chartered Learjet 35](#) with golfer Payne Stewart and five others on board—was intercepted by NORAD over North America in the decade prior to 9/11, which took one hour and 19 minutes.^[a] Rules in effect at that time, and on 9/11, barred supersonic flight on intercepts. Before 9/11, [all other NORAD interceptions were limited to offshore Air Defense Identification Zones \(ADIZ\).](#) "[Until 9/11 there was no domestic ADIZ,](#)" says FAA spokesman Bill Schumann. After 9/11, the FAA and NORAD increased cooperation. They set up hotlines between command centers while NORAD increased its fighter coverage and installed radar to watch airspace over the continent.^[a] [The longest warning NORAD received of the hijackings was some eight minutes for American Airlines Flight 11,](#) the first flight hijacked. The FAA alerted NORAD to the hijacked Flight 175 at just about the same time it was crashing into the World Trade Center's South Tower. The FAA notified [NORAD of the missing – not hijacked – Flight 77 three minutes before it struck the Pentagon.](#) NORAD received no warning of the hijack of United Flight 93 until three minutes after it had crashed in Pennsylvania.

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11_conspiracy_theories#Suspected_insider_trading>

Towers Blown up

Monday, September 13, 2021 9:08 PM

Planes Didn't Make Twin Towers Collapse, Bombs Did

The [World Trade Center](#) collapse appeared similar to a controlled demolition. Many speculate that the towers were in fact blown down with explosives placed in selected locations. Some witnesses recounted hearing explosions inside the building as they attempted to escape. Many architects and scientists even maintain that a plane's fuel cannot produce enough heat to melt the steel frames of the two buildings that collapsed.

Aluminum Planes Can't Penetrate Steel Structure Of World Trade Center

Commercial airplanes' frames are constructed with a very light aluminum material in order to make it easier to fly. Theorists maintain there is no possible way an airplane can do as much damage to the Twin Towers as it did. They believe that missiles or explosives were used to ensure the buildings collapsed.

From <https://newsone.com/742485/the-11-most-compelling-911-conspiracy-theories/>

The Twin Towers were brought down by explosives not planes

Within just a few hours of the attacks on the Twin Towers, perhaps the most well-known of all the theories had already surfaced in an Internet chat room. The author of that post likened the collapse of the North and South Towers to an act of controlled demolition due to the way the buildings fell so quickly and perfectly into their own footprint. After the dust had settled, theorists raised further evidence in the form of witness testimonies, citing reports of explosions being heard before the Towers collapsed and debris visibly shooting out from the lower levels of the buildings.



When the official report stated the Towers fell due to severe structural damage caused by the planes and resulting fires, conspiracy theorists or 'truthers' as they are otherwise known, argued the fires did not burn for long enough (56 minutes in the case of the South Tower) to cause the catastrophic collapses.

From <https://www.history.co.uk/shows/road-to-911/5-compelling-9-11-conspiracy-theories>

The plane crashes and resulting fires caused the [collapse of the World Trade Center](#). [Controlled demolition conspiracy theories](#) say the collapse of the North Tower, South Tower, or of [7 World Trade Center](#) was caused by explosives installed in the buildings in advance. Demolition theory proponents, such as [Brigham Young University](#) physicist [Steven E. Jones](#), architect [Richard Gage](#), software engineer [Jim Hoffman](#), and theologian [David Ray Griffin](#), argue that the aircraft impacts and resulting fires could not have weakened the buildings sufficiently to initiate a catastrophic collapse, and that the buildings would not have collapsed completely, nor at the speeds that they did without additional factors weakening the structures.

In the article "Active Thermotic Material Discovered in Dust from the 9/11 World Trade Center Catastrophe", which appeared in the [Open Chemical Physics Journal](#), authors Niels Harrit of the [University of Copenhagen's](#) Department of Chemistry, Jeffrey Farrer of [Brigham Young University's](#) Department of Physics and Astronomy, Steven E. Jones, and others state that [thermite](#) and [nano-thermite](#) composites in the dust and debris were found following the collapse of the three buildings. The article contained no scientific rebuttal and the editor in chief of the publication subsequently resigned. [\[1\]](#)

Jones has not explained how the amount of explosive needed to bring down the buildings could have been positioned in the two buildings without drawing attention, but mentioned efforts to research the buildings' maintenance activity in the weeks prior to the event. [Federal investigators at the National Institute of Standards and Technology](#) state that enormous quantities of thermite would have to be applied to the structural columns to damage them, but Jones disputed this, saying that he and others were investigating "superthermite" [\[2\]](#) Brent Blanchard, author of "A History of Explosive Demolition in America" [\[3\]](#), who corresponded with Jones, states that questions about the viability of Jones' theories remain unanswered, such as the fact that no demolition personnel noticed any telltale signs of thermite during the eight months of debris removal following the towers' collapse. Blanchard also said that a verifiable chain of possession needs to be established for the tested beams, which did not occur with the beams Jones tested, raising questions of whether the metal pieces tested could have been cut away from the debris pile with acetylene torches, shears, or other potentially contaminated equipment while on site, or exposed to trace amounts of thermite or other compounds while being handled, while in storage, or while being transferred from Ground Zero to memorial sites.



Excavating equipment was cooled by water spray due to concerns about melting from underground fires.

Jones also said that molten steel found in the rubble was evidence of explosives, as an ordinary airplane fire would not generate enough heat to produce this, citing photographs of red debris being removed by construction equipment, but Blanchard said that if there had been any molten steel in the rubble any excavation equipment encountering it would have been immediately damaged. [\[4\]](#) Other sampling of the pulverized dust by [United States Geological Survey](#) and RJ Lee did not report any evidence of thermite or explosives. It has been theorized the "thermite material" found was primer paint. [\[5\]](#) Dave Thomas of [Skeptical Inquirer](#) magazine, noting that the residue in question was claimed to be thermite because of its iron oxide and aluminum composition, pointed out that these substances are found in many items common to the towers. Thomas said that in order to cut through a vertical steel beam, special high-temperature containment must be added to prevent the molten iron from dropping down, and that the thermite reaction is too slow for it to be practically used in building demolition. Thomas pointed out that when [Jesse Ventura](#) hired [New Mexico Tech](#) to conduct a demonstration showing nanothermite slicing through a large steel beam, the nanothermite produced copious flame and smoke but no damage to the beam, even though it was in a horizontal, and therefore optimal, position. [\[6\]](#) The [National Institute of Standards and Technology](#) (NIST) concluded the accepted version was more than sufficient to explain the collapse of the buildings. NIST and many scientists refuse to debate conspiracy theorists because they feel it would give those theories unwarranted credibility. [\[7\]](#) Specialists in structural mechanics and structural engineering accept the model of a fire-induced, gravity-driven collapse of the World Trade Center buildings without the use of explosives. [\[8\]](#) As a result, NIST said that it did not perform any test for the residue of explosive compounds of any kind in the debris. [\[9\]](#)

Soon after the day of the attacks, major media sources published that the towers had collapsed due to heat melting the steel [\[10\]](#). The erroneous claim that the combustion temperature of jet fuel could not melt steel contributed to the belief among skeptics that the towers would not have collapsed without external interference. The basic claim is false, because the [combustion temperature of kerosene](#) (jet fuel) is, in fact, more than 500 °C higher than the [melting point of structural steel](#) (2093 °C vs. less than 1539 °C).

Further, NIST did not claim that the steel melted, but rather that heat softened and weakened the steel, and that weakening, together with the damage caused by the planes' impacts, caused structural collapse. [\[11\]](#) NIST reported that a simulation model based on the simple assumption that combustible vapors burned immediately upon mixing with the incoming air showed that "at any given location, the duration of [gas] temperatures near 1,000 °C was about 15 to 20 [minutes]. The rest of the time, the calculated temperatures were 500 °C or below." [\[12\]](#)

Since 9/11, at least two steel-framed high-rise buildings have collapsed solely due to fires — the [Piasco Building](#) in [Tehran](#), Iran on January 19, 2017, [\[13\]](#) and the [Wilton Paes de Almeida Building](#) in [São Paulo](#), Brazil, on May 1, 2018. [\[14\]](#)

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11_conspiracy_theories#Suspected_insider_trading

9/11 And The Twin Towers



United Airlines Flight 175 crashes into the south tower of the World Trade Center complex in New York City during the September 11 attacks.

On September 11, 2001, two hijacked airplanes—American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175—flew into the north and south towers of the World Trade Center. There are a handful of conspiracy theorists who believe that [George W. Bush](#) and his administration orchestrated the whole attack as an excuse to declare the War on Terror on the Islamic world just five days later. In their minds, the United States government is responsible for the near 3,000 fatalities. Many of these individuals claim that the devastation was exacerbated by hidden bombs planted in the towers, which caused approximately sixteen percent of the damage.

From <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/12-of-the-most-popular-conspiracy-theories-in-american-history.html>

Pentagon Attack

Monday, September 13, 2021 9:08 PM

The Pentagon Attack Scientifically Doesn't Hold Up
The [Pentagon crash](#) may be the most puzzling event of the day. Theorists maintain that the impact holes in the Pentagon were much smaller than a commercial American Airlines plane. They also question why the plane was not shot down prior to impact, as well as why the plane impacted a section of the Pentagon that was vacant due to renovations.

From <<https://newsone.com/742485/the-11-most-compelling-9-11-conspiracy-theories/>>

A missile hit the Pentagon (not American Airlines Flight 77)

Early video footage and photos taken from the scene did not seem to show much evidence of plane wreckage. Theorists maintain this was evidence that the Pentagon was not struck by Flight 77, but by a missile or unmanned drone instead. They also argue that the structural damage to the building was too minor to have been made by a commercial airliner and question why the plane (piloted by an amateur) was even allowed to crash into the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense.

From <<https://www.history.co.uk/shows/road-to-911/5-compelling-9-11-conspiracy-theories>>

Political activist [Thierry Meyssan](#) and filmmaker [Dylan Avery](#) claim that [American Airlines Flight 77](#) did not crash into [the Pentagon](#). Instead, they argue that the Pentagon was hit by a missile launched by elements from inside the U.S. government. Some claim that the holes in the Pentagon walls were far too small to have been made by a Boeing 757: "How does a plane 125 ft. wide and 155 ft. long fit into a hole which is only 60 ft. across?" Meyssan's book, *L'Effroyable Imposture* (published in English as *9/11: The Big Lie*) became available in more than a dozen languages. When released, the book was heavily criticized by both the mainstream French and American press, and later, from within the [9/11 Truth movement](#). The French newspaper *Liberation* called the book "a tissue of wild and irresponsible allegations, entirely without foundation." [L'Espresso](#) In response to the conspiracy theorists' claim of a missile hitting the Pentagon, Mete Sozen, a professor of civil engineering at [Purdue University](#) argues that: "A crashing jet doesn't punch a cartoon-like outline of itself into a reinforced concrete building. When Flight 77 hit the Pentagon, one wing hit the ground and the other was sheared off by the Pentagon's load-bearing columns." [Architectural Record](#) According to *ArchitectureWeek*, the reason the Pentagon took relatively little damage from the impact was because Wedge One had recently been renovated [here](#) (This was part of a renovation program which had been begun in the 1980s, and [Wedge One was the first of five to be renovated here](#).) Evidence contradicting some conspiracy theorists' claim of a missile hitting the Pentagon have been described by researchers within the 9/11 Truth Movement, such as Jim Hoffman, in his essay "The Pentagon Attack: What the Physical Evidence Shows", and by others broadly refuting the role of other conspiracies in the attacks. The evidence refuting missile claims includes airplane debris including Flight 77's [black boxes](#), [the nose cone](#), [landing gear](#), [an airplane tire](#), and an intact cockpit seat were observed at the crash site. The remains of passengers from Flight 77 were indeed found at the Pentagon crash site and their identities confirmed by [DNA analysis](#). [Many eyewitnesses saw the plane strike the Pentagon](#). Further, Flight 77 passengers made phone calls reporting that their airplane had been hijacked. For example, passenger Renee May called her mother to tell her that the plane had been hijacked and that the passengers had been herded to the back of the plane. Another passenger named [Barbara Olson](#) called her husband (U.S. Solicitor General [Theodore Olson](#)) and said that the flight had been hijacked, and that the hijackers had [knives](#) and [box cutters](#). [Some conspiracy theories say the phone calls the passengers made were fabricated by voice morphing, the passengers' bodies disposed of, and a missile fired at the Pentagon.](#) [The pressure group Judicial Watch filed a Freedom of Information Act request on December 15, 2004, to force the government to release video recordings from the Sheraton National Hotel, the Nexcomm/Citgo gas station, Pentagon security cameras and the Virginia Department of Transportation. On May 16, 2006, the government released the Pentagon security camera videos to Judicial Watch.](#) [The image of American Airlines Flight 77 which appears in the videos has been described as "\[a\] white blob" and "a white streak" \(by the BBC\), "a thin white blur" \(by The Associated Press\), and "a silver speck low to the ground" \(in The Washington Post\).](#) A sequence of five frames from one of the videos already appeared in the media in 2002. [Some conspiracy theorists believe the new video does not answer their questions.](#)

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11_conspiracy_theories#Suspected_insider_trading>

Flight 93

Monday, September 13, 2021 9:09 PM

Flight 93 Was Completely Staged

The fourth hijacked plane, Flight 93, crashed in Shanksville, Penn. It is believed that the passengers fought back and crashed the plane into a field. Skeptics believe that Flight 93 landed safely, while a substitute plane was shot out of the sky. Other theorists believe that the passengers were murdered, or relocated and will never be found.

From <<https://newsone.com/742485/the-11-most-compelling-911-conspiracy-theories/>>

United Airlines Flight 93 was shot down

According to official reports, the passengers onboard Flight 93 attempted to take back the plane from the hijackers and the subsequent struggle caused the aircraft to crash into an open field in Pennsylvania. As with the Pentagon attack, theorists state that little plane wreckage was actually discovered in the field and the crash site itself was too small for an airliner that size, arguing instead that the plane was shot down by the military and so it disintegrated over a larger area.

From <<https://www.history.co.uk/shows/road-to-911/5-compelling-9-11-conspiracy-theories>>

The White Jet

CLAIM: At least six eyewitnesses say they saw a small white jet flying low over the crash area almost immediately after Flight 93 went down. BlogD.com theorizes that the aircraft was downed by "either a missile fired from an Air Force jet, or via an electronic assault made by a U.S. Customs airplane reported to have been seen near the site minutes after Flight 93 crashed." WorldNetDaily.com also weighs in: "Witnesses to this low-flying jet ... told their story to journalists. Shortly thereafter, the FBI began to attack the witnesses with perhaps the most inane disinformation ever—alleging the witnesses actually observed a private jet at 34,000 [feet]. The FBI says the jet was asked to come down to 5000 [feet] and try to find the crash site. This would require about 20 minutes to descend."

FACT: There was such a jet in the vicinity—a Dassault Falcon 20 business jet owned by the VF Corp. of Greensboro, North Carolina, an apparel company that markets Wrangler jeans and other brands. The VF plane was flying into Johnstown-Cambria airport, 20 miles north of Shanksville. According to David Newell, VF's director of aviation and travel, the FAA's Cleveland Center contacted copilot Yates Gladwell when the Falcon was at an altitude "in the neighborhood of 3,000 to 4,000 feet." Not 34,000 feet. "They were in a descent already going into Johnstown," Newell adds. "The FAA asked them to investigate and they did. They got down within 1500 [feet] of the ground when they circled. They saw a hole in the ground with smoke coming out of it. They pinpointed the location and then continued on." Reached by *Popular Mechanics*, Gladwell confirmed this account, but, concerned about ongoing harassment by conspiracy theorists, asked not to be quoted directly.

Roving Engine

CLAIM: One of Flight 93's engines was found "at a considerable distance from the crash site," according to Lyle Szupinka, a state police officer on the scene who was quoted in the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. Offering no evidence, a posting on Rense.com claimed: "The main body of the engine ... was found miles away from the main wreckage site with damage comparable to that which a heat-seeking missile would do to an airliner."

FACT: Experts on the scene told *Popular Mechanics* that a fan from one of the engines was recovered in a catchment basin downhill from the crash site. Jeff Reinbold, the National Park Service representative responsible for the Flight 93 National Memorial, confirms the direction and distance from the crash site to the basin: just over 300 yards south, which means the fan landed in the direction the jet was traveling. "It's not unusual for an engine to move or tumble across the ground," says Michael K. Hynes, an airline accident expert who investigated the crash of TWA Flight 800 out of New York City in 1996. "When you have very high velocities, 500 miles per hour or more," Hynes says, "you are talking about 700 to 800 feet per second. For something to hit the ground with that kind of energy, it would only take a few seconds to bounce up and travel 300 yards." Numerous crash analysts contacted by *Popular Mechanics* concur.

Indian Lake



PM

CLAIM: "Residents and workers at businesses outside Shanksville, Somerset County, reported discovering clothing, books, papers, and what appeared to be human remains," states a *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* article dated Sept. 13, 2001. "Others reported what appeared to be crash debris floating in Indian Lake, nearly six miles from the immediate crash scene." Commenting on reports that Indian Lake residents collected debris, ThinkAndAsk.com

The fourth plane hijacked on 9/11, [United Airlines Flight 93](#), crashed in an open field near [Shanksville, Pennsylvania](#), after the passengers revolted. Out of the four planes hijacked on that day, Flight 93 was the only one not to reach its target. [One conspiracy theory](#) surrounding this event is [claim Flight 93 was shot down by a U.S. fighter jet](#). [David Ray Griffin](#) and [Alex Jones](#) have asserted that large parts of the plane, including the main body of the engine, landed miles away from the main wreckage site, too far away for an ordinary plane crash. Jones says that planes usually leave a small debris field when they crash, and that this is not compatible with reports of wreckage found farther away from the main crash site. One person claimed that the main body of the engine was found miles away from the main wreckage site with damage comparable to that which a heat-seeking missile would do to an airliner. [According to some theories](#), the plane had to be shot down by the government because passengers had found out about the alleged plot. [According to Phil Molé of Skeptic magazine](#), "[this] claim rests largely on unsupported assertions that the main body of the engine and other large parts of the plane turned up miles from the main wreckage site, too far away to have resulted from an ordinary crash. This claim is incorrect, because the engine was found only 300 yards from the main crash site, and its location was consistent with the direction in which the plane had been traveling." [Michael K. Hynes](#), an airline accident expert who investigated the crash of [TWA Flight 800](#) in 1996, says that, at very high velocities of 500 mph or more, it would only take a few seconds to move or tumble across the ground for 300 yards. [Reports of wreckage discovered at Indian Lake by local residents are accurate](#). CNN reported that investigators found debris from the crash at least eight miles away from the crash site, including in [New Baltimore](#). [However, according to CNN, this debris was all very light material that the wind would have easily blown away, and a Pittsburgh Post-Gazette article from September 14, 2001, describes the material as "mostly papers", "strands of charred insulation", and an "endorsed paycheck".](#) The same article quotes FBI agent Bill Crowley that, "Lighter, smaller debris probably shot into the air on the heat of a fireball that witnesses said shot several hundred feet into the air after the jetliner crashed. Then, it probably rode a wind that was blowing southeast at about 9 m.p.h." [Also, the distance between the crash site and Indian Lake was misreported in some accounts. According to the BBC, "In a straight line, Indian Lake is just over a mile from the crash site. The road between the two locations takes a roundabout route of 6.9 miles—accounting for the erroneous reports."](#)

Some conspiracy theorists believe a small white jet seen flying over the crash area may have fired a missile to shoot down Flight 93. [However, government agencies such as the FBI assert this small plane was a Dassault Falcon business jet asked to descend to an altitude of around 1,500 ft to survey the impact.](#) [Ben Sliney](#), who was the FAA operation manager on September 11, 2001, says no military aircraft were near Flight 93. [Some internet videos, such as Loose Change, speculate that Flight 93 safely landed in Ohio, and a substituted plane was involved in the crash in Pennsylvania. Often cited is a preliminary news report that Flight 93 landed at a Cleveland airport; it was later learned that Delta Flight 1989 was the plane confused with Flight 93, and the report was retracted as inaccurate.](#) Several websites within the 9/11 Truth Movement dispute this claim, citing the wreckage at the scene, eyewitness testimony, and the difficulty of secretly substituting one plane for another, and claim that such "hoax theories ... appear calculated to alienate victims' survivors and the larger public from the 9/11 truth movement". The editor of the article has since written a [rebuttal](#) to the claims. [Valencia McClatchey](#), a local woman who took the only photograph of the mushroom cloud from the impact of Flight 93 seconds after it hit the ground, says she has been harassed over the telephone and in person by conspiracy theorists, who claim she faked the photo. The FBI, the Somerset County authorities, the Smithsonian, and the National Park Service's Flight 93 National Memorial staff have all individually examined the photograph as well as the film negatives and all four agencies consider the photo to be authentic. [While some conspiracy theorists have claimed that passengers of Flight 93 and/or Flight 77 were murdered or that they were relocated, with the intent that they never be found, others within the 9/11 Truth Movement, such as Jim Hoffman and Scholars for 9/11 Truth & Justice, repudiate such claims.](#)

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11_conspiracy_theories#Suspected_insider_trading>

speculates: "On Sept. 10, 2001, a strong cold front pushed through the area, and behind it—winds blew northerly. Since Flight 93 crashed west-southwest of Indian Lake, **it was impossible for debris to fly perpendicular to wind direction. ... The FBI lied.**" And the significance of widespread debris? Theorists claim the plane was breaking up before it crashed. TheForbiddenKnowledge.com states bluntly: "Without a doubt, **Flight 93 was shot down.**"

FACT: Wallace Miller, Somerset County coroner, tells *Popular Mechanics* that no body parts were found in Indian Lake. **Human remains were confined to a 70-acre area directly surrounding the crash site.** Paper and tiny scraps of **sheetmetal**, however, did land in the lake. "Very light debris will fly into the air, because of the concussion," says former National Transportation Safety Board investigator Matthew McCormick. Indian Lake is less than 1.5 miles southeast of the impact crater—not six miles—easily within range of debris blasted skyward by the heat of the explosion from the crash. And the wind that day was northwesterly, at nine to 12 mph, which means it was blowing *from* the northwest—toward Indian Lake.

F-16 Pilot



F-16 fighter jets of Turkish Air Forces perform NATO Air Policing duty in Malbork, Poland on August 27, 2021

ANADOLU AGENCYGETTY IMAGES

CLAIM: In February 2004, retired Army Col. Donn de Grand-Pre said on "The Alex Jones Show," a radio talk show broadcast on 42 stations: "It [Flight 93] was taken out by the North Dakota Air Guard. I know the pilot who fired those two missiles to take down 93." LetsRoll911.org, citing de Grand-Pre, identifies the **pilot:** "Major Rick Gibney fired two Sidewinder missiles at the aircraft and destroyed it in mid-flight at precisely 0958."

FACT: Saying he was reluctant to fuel debate by responding to unsubstantiated charges, **Gibney (a lieutenant colonel, not a major) declined to comment.**

According to Air National Guard spokesman Master Sgt. David Somdahl, **Gibney flew an F-16 that morning—but nowhere near Shanksville.** He took off from Fargo, North Dakota, and flew to Bozeman, Montana, to pick up Ed Jacoby Jr., the director of the New York State Emergency Management Office. Gibney then flew Jacoby from Montana to Albany, New York, so that Jacoby could coordinate 17,000 rescue workers engaged in the state's response to 9/11.

"IT DISGUSTS ME TO SEE THIS BECAUSE THE PUBLIC IS BEING MISLED."

Jacoby confirms the day's events. "I was in Big Sky for an emergency managers meeting. Someone called to say an F-16 was landing in Bozeman. From there we flew to Albany." Jacoby is outraged by the claim that Gibney shot down Flight 93. **"I summarily dismiss that because Lt. Col. Gibney was with me at that time.** It disgusts me to see this because the public is being misled. More than anything else, it disgusts me because it brings up fears. It brings up hopes—it brings up all sorts of feelings, not only to the victims' families but to all the individuals throughout the country, and the world for that matter. I get angry at the misinformation out there."

From <<https://www.popularmechanics.com/military/a5688/debunking-911-myths-flight-93/>>

The Bush Administration Executed A 9/11 Conspiracy As A Pretext For War



Wikimedia Commons Perhaps the most persistent September 11th conspiracy theory holds that President Bush used these attacks to provide a rationale for going to war in Iraq.

It's early 2001. The economy isn't doing so great. The Chinese air force has captured an American spy plane. The last election was a farce. It's the Summer of the Shark. President Bush has mediocre approval ratings. The only thing that will solve our political problems and lift America out of this slump is a good old-fashioned war, preferably someplace where there's a lot of oil, and the sooner we can make it happen, the better.

The only problem is, there's nothing to really motivate the people to get behind the Commander-in-Chief. That's when it occurs to someone deep in the bowels of Halliburton: Strike down the Twin Towers as a pretext for invading Iraq and stealing all the oil. It's brilliant, and it's guaranteed to get the American people in line for whatever sinister agenda Bush wants to ram home over the next seven years in office. The only way it could possibly go wrong is if some [exceptionally bright twentysomethings](#) spent a few hours Googling things and blew the lid off of the whole affair after the fact.

Nobody is claiming that 9/11 wasn't good for the Bush Administration's poll numbers. Overnight, George W. Bush went from a potential lame duck to a dashing protector of the realm.

Ten days after the attack, [Gallup reported a 40-point spike](#) in Bush's approval ratings to an unprecedented 90 percent. Without this mandate, it's unlikely that Bush would have been able to push America into wars in Iraq and Afghanistan or drive through various repressive laws like the Patriot Act.

But let's get real. This theory — perhaps the most popular of all 9/11 conspiracy theories — holds that Bush either staged the attack or let it happen despite warnings so he could cozen the nation into unnecessary wars in the Muslim world.

This seems like a bit of a stretch, to put it mildly, given that Afghanistan was already exporting 90 percent of the world's heroin at the time and Saddam Hussein was in violation of several UN resolutions, factors which made both countries perfectly legitimate targets for intervention under international law.

The theory also presumes that a sitting president of the United States either ignored or positively approved of a plot to kill thousands of his own citizens so that war could be declared on Iraq, but that no hijackers could be found who were actually from Iraq or Afghanistan, so they hired Saudis and Egyptians instead.

In other words, George Bush pulled off a brilliant false-flag attack on his own country in order to justify a war against two specific countries, but then his minions forgot to hire people from those countries as attackers, thus forcing the administration to spend the next year and a half cooking up flimsy connections between Al Qaeda and the one man Osama bin Laden probably hated worse than Bush: Saddam Hussein.

All of this to justify two wars that could probably have been done at any time and without all the televised murders.

From <https://allthatsinteresting.com/911-conspiracy-theories>