



Adult 9/11 Audio Guide

On September 11, 2001, nineteen terrorists who were members of al-Qaeda, an Islamist extremist network, hijacked four commercial airplanes. In a coordinated attack, the hijackers intentionally flew two of the planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, and a third into the Pentagon. Learning about the other hijackings, passengers and crew members on the fourth plane launched a counterattack, spurring the hijacker pilot to crash the plane into a field in Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 people were killed on that day, the single largest loss of life resulting from a foreign attack on American soil. The following is a narrated timeline of events that occurred on 9/11. Listener discretion is advised.

On the morning of 9/11, a total of nineteen terrorists will hijack four California-bound commercial airplanes shortly after their departures from airports in Boston, Massachusetts; Newark, New Jersey; and the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Before 9/11, airports were not required to videotape security checkpoints. At that time, knives were allowed on planes if the blade was less than four inches in length.

7:59 A.M. Flight 11 Takes Off

American Airlines Flight 11 takes off from Boston. Eleven crew members, 76 passengers, and five hijackers are on board. The aircraft is filled with 76,400 pounds of fuel for its transcontinental run to Los Angeles.

8:15 A.M. Flight 175 Takes Off

United Airlines Flight 175 takes off from Boston for Los Angeles. Nine crew members, 51 passengers, and five hijackers are on board. The flight is loaded with 76,000 pounds of fuel.

8:19 A.M. Flight 11 Crew Members Contact Ground Personnel

Flight attendant Betty Ann Ong alerts American Airlines ground personnel to a hijacking underway on Flight 11, reporting that the cockpit is unreachable. Using an inflight phone, Ong transmits detailed information about the hijacking on the call, which lasts about 25 minutes.

Shortly before Ong's call, a hijacker, likely Satam al-Suqami, had stabbed the passenger seated directly in front of him in first class. Hijackers Mohamed Atta and Abdul Aziz al-Omari are seated in close proximity as well. The passenger, identified as Daniel M. Lewin by the flight crew, had served four years in the Israeli army. The Final Report of the National Commission on



Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States speculates he may have tried to stop the hijackers. Lewin was likely the first person killed in the 9/11 attacks.

At 8:21 a.m., two minutes into Ong's call, the hijackers turn off the plane's transponder—a device that allows air traffic control to identify and monitor an airplane's flight path. Meanwhile, American Airlines authorities relay details from Ong to their operations center in Texas. Five minutes later, Ong provides the hijackers' seat numbers to American Airlines.

After several failed connections, at 8:32 a.m., flight attendant Madeline Amy Sweeney reports the hijacking of Flight 11 to a friend on the ground, a manager at Boston Logan International Airport. Over the course of approximately 12 minutes, Sweeney provides key information about the hijacking, including a description of the perpetrators.

8:20 A.M. Flight 77 Takes Off

American Airlines Flight 77, en route to Los Angeles, takes off from Washington Dulles International Airport. Six crew members, 53 passengers, and five hijackers are on board. The flight is loaded with 49,900 pounds of fuel.

8:24 A.M. Flight 11 Hijacker Transmits a Message

Attempting to communicate with passengers and crew inside Flight 11's cabin, hijacker Mohamed Atta presses the wrong button, broadcasting instead to air traffic control and unwittingly alerting controllers to the attacks. Minutes later, Atta again makes an unintended transmission to ground control.

At least one of Atta's transmissions is picked up by the pilot of Flight 175, Victor J. Saracini, who will inform the Federal Aviation Administration of what he has heard minutes before his own plane is hijacked.

8:30 A.M. The World Trade Center Comes to Life

Morning activities have commenced at the World Trade Center, a commercial building complex in lower Manhattan owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, an interstate agency. In addition to the signature Twin Towers (1 and 2 World Trade Center), the complex



included a hotel (3 World Trade Center), four office buildings (4, 5, 6, and 7 World Trade Center), a shopping mall, restaurants, a public plaza, and a major transportation hub.

8:42 A.M. Flight 93 Takes Off

Scheduled to leave Newark International Airport within minutes of the other hijacked flights, United Airlines Flight 93 takes off after a delay due to routine traffic. Seven crew members, 33 passengers, and four hijackers are on board the San Francisco-bound flight, which is filled with 48,700 pounds of fuel.

8:46 A.M. North Tower Attack

Five hijackers crash American Airlines Flight 11 into floors 93 through 99 of 1 World Trade Center (North Tower). The 76 passengers and 11 crew members on board and hundreds inside the building are killed instantly. The crash severs all three emergency stairwells and traps hundreds of people above the 91st floor.

8:46 A.M. Responders Mobilize and North Tower Evacuation Begins

New York City emergency dispatchers send police, paramedics, and firefighters to the North Tower.

Immediately after witnessing the crash from 14 blocks north of the World Trade Center, Battalion Chief Joseph Pfeifer directs New York City Fire Department (FDNY) dispatch to issue a second alarm. En route to the scene, he signals a third alarm, which calls for 23 engine and ladder companies, 12 chiefs, and 10 specialized units to respond to a plane crash at “Box 8087,” the FDNY’s shorthand reference for the World Trade Center. Vehicle drivers are instructed to park adjacent to the North Tower.

The Port Authority Police Department (PAPD), responsible for the safety and security of the World Trade Center in addition to regional bridges, tunnels, airports, and the Port of New York and New Jersey, mobilizes in response to the attack. Additional PAPD units from other posts dispatch to the World Trade Center to aid in evacuation and rescue.

8:59: Port Authority Police Department ordered the evacuation of Twin Towers, and moments later, the entire World Trade Center Complex



9:00 A.M. On Board Flight 175



Earlier, at 8:52 a.m., a flight attendant, likely Robert John Fangman, had reached a United Airlines operator in San Francisco, California, and reported a hijacking underway. By 9:00 a.m., passengers Garnet Ace Bailey, Peter Burton Hanson, and Brian David Sweeney have called family members.

9:03 A.M. South Tower Attack

Five hijackers crash United Airlines Flight 175 into floors 77 through 85 of 2 World Trade Center (South Tower), killing the 51 passengers and nine crew members onboard the aircraft and an unknown number of people inside the building. The impact renders two of the three emergency stairwells impassable and severs a majority of the elevator cables in this area, trapping many above the impact zone and inside elevator cars.

Shortly after hijacked Flight 175 strikes the South Tower, some workers in the building jump or fall to their deaths, a phenomenon already witnessed after the attack on the North Tower. Estimates of the number of people who die as a result of falling from the Twin Towers range from 50 to more than 200.

9:03 A.M. Increasing Response

In addition to requesting the shutdown of airspace over New York City, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) calls for a second Level 4 mobilization, bringing its total deployment to nearly 2,000 officers.

The New York City Fire Department (FDNY) issues a fifth alarm for the South Tower, deploying several hundred additional firefighters to the disaster. Additional companies and off-duty personnel from across the metropolitan area travel to the scene.

9:12am

On Board Flight 77

Flight attendant Renee A. May calls her mother, Nancy May, and tells her that hijackers have seized control of the plane, forcing passengers and crew members to the rear. When they disconnected, Nancy May calls American Airlines.



Minutes, later, Flight 77 passenger Barbara K. Olson calls her husband, US Solicitor General Theodore Olson, who is at his desk in the Department of Justice. She tells him that hijackers have taken over the flight using knives and box cutters. Theodore Olson alerts other federal agencies.

9:37 A.M. Attack at the Pentagon

Five hijackers crash American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon. The 53 passengers and six crew members on board perish. The crash and ensuing fire kill 125 military and civilian personnel on the ground.

9:58 A.M. 9-1-1 Call from Flight 93

Thirty-seven telephone calls are known to have been made from hijacked Flight 93, most placed from the rear of the plane. One of the last calls is made by passenger Edward P. Felt, who uses his cell phone to dial 9-1-1 after closing himself in a restroom to avoid detection. By 9:58 a.m., Flight 93 is flying so low that he succeeds in reaching an emergency operator in nearby Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.

9:59 A.M. Collapse of the South Tower

After burning for 56 minutes, the South Tower collapses in 10 seconds. More than 800 civilians and first responders inside the building and in the surrounding area are killed as a result of the attack on the South Tower.

10:03 A.M. Crash of Flight 93

Four hijackers crash Flight 93 in a field near the town of Shanksville in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, after passengers and crew storm the cockpit. The 33 passengers and seven crew members on board perish. The crash site is approximately 20 minutes' flying time from Washington, D.C.



10:28 A.M. Collapse of the North Tower



The North Tower collapses after burning for 102 minutes. More than 1,600 people are killed as a result of the attack on the North Tower.

11:02 A.M. New York City Mayor Orders Evacuation of Lower Manhattan

Near the World Trade Center when the South Tower collapses, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and senior members of his administration find temporary shelter inside an office building close by. As the dust begins to settle, they walk north, intent on establishing a new base of operations for city government. Reporters catch up with the mayor, who urges the public at 11:02 a.m. to evacuate lower Manhattan. He will continue to address the public in briefings at temporary headquarters at the New York City Police Academy throughout the day.

Afternoon: Rescue Efforts Continue at the World Trade Center Site

Within hours of the attacks, some rescue workers and journalists begin referring to the scene of mass destruction at the World Trade Center site as Ground Zero, a term typically used to describe devastation caused by an atomic bomb.

First responders, search and rescue teams, and volunteers continue to converge on Ground Zero throughout the day. Rescuers use special tools to peer into voids and search for remnants of stairwells and elevators that might shelter survivors. The last successful rescue will occur midday on September 12.

8:30 P.M. U.S. President Addresses the Nation from the White House

“The search is under way for those who are behind these evil acts. I’ve directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.” —U.S. President George W. Bush

The Global War on Terror Begins

Oct. 7, 2001: Airstrikes by the United States and Great Britain are launched in Afghanistan at Taliban and al Qaeda training camps and targets. “What America is tasting now is only a copy of what we have tasted,” al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden says in a video statement released the



same day. “Our Islamic nation has been tasting the same for more than 80 years of humiliation and disgrace, its sons killed, and their blood spilled, its sanctities desecrated.”

Oct. 19-20, 2001: The ground war begins, with special forces striking in Kandahar. In the coming weeks, Britain, Turkey, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, France and Poland all announce they will deploy troops to Afghanistan.

March 19, 2003: U.S. and coalition forces invade Iraq following intelligence that the country and its dictator, Saddam Hussein, possessed or were developing weapons of mass destruction.

Operation Iraqi Freedom: 4,431 American deaths

Operation New Dawn: 74 American deaths

Operation Enduring Freedom: 2,353 American deaths

Operation Inherent Resolve: 99 American deaths

Operation Freedom’s Sentinel: 95 American deaths

Brave Americans served strangers on 9/11/2001. Brave Americans have fought the enemies of our Nation since then in foreign lands to protect the homeland, our homeland. There is bravery in all of us. There is bravery and power in you.

When we remember nine-eleven, we should all be reminded to practice kindness, compassion, and bravery. We should remember that first responders and military servicemembers volunteer to protect us from terrorism. We should remember that when bad things happen, we as Americans can come together and help each other. The events of 9/11 brought us together. Many brave American men and women fought in that war in places like Iraq and Afghanistan since then, but they constitute a tiny majority of our Nation’s populace. A lot of them are still fighting in that war as you listen to this, remember that.

We hope you do something special today to honor nine-eleven: Go for a walk or run or hike, talk to your friends and family about nine-eleven and maybe even profess some gratitude to those who volunteer to help and protect us as citizens. It is important to come together today, on September 11th, just like we did on September 11th, 2001. We can unite together as a Nation, and do something meaningful, something positive, and something brave. Thanks for listening and learning about nine-eleven with me. Go lead, go learn, and go inspire.