

# SPECIAL REPORTS

## Full El Al flight took off on 9/11 from JFK to Tel Aviv

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([WMR](#)) -- WMR has learned from two El Al sources who worked for the Israeli airline at New York's John F. Kennedy airport that on 9/11, hours after the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grounded all civilian domestic and international incoming and outgoing flights to and from the United States, a full El Al Boeing 747 took off from JFK bound for Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport.

The two El Al employee sources are not Israeli nationals but legal immigrants from Ecuador who were working in the United States for the airline.

The flight departed JFK at 4:11 pm and its departure was, according to the El Al sources, authorized by the direct intervention of the U.S. Department of Defense. U.S. military officials were on the scene at JFK and were personally involved with the airport and air traffic control authorities to clear the flight for take-off.

According to the 9/11 Commission report, Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta ordered all civilian flights to be grounded at 9:45 am on September 11.

The New York Air Traffic control center's audio tape of recollections of air traffic controllers made an hour and a half after the 9/11 attacks were destroyed by an air traffic control manager who did not face criminal charges for destroying physical evidence on the worst terrorist attack in American history. The Transportation Department later claimed the destruction of the tape was the result of mere "poor judgment."

The El Al flight took off two days before commercial flights were permitted to resume on September 13. Private flights were only permitted to resume on September 14. On September 13, a chartered Lear jet flew three Saudis, including a member of the Saudi royal family, from Tampa to Lexington, Kentucky. On September 14, a chartered Northstar Aviation flight flew four Saudis from Providence, Rhode Island to Paris.

On [August 22, 2005, WMR reported](#): "Four Americans flew with 'Air Bin Laden' flight transporting Bin Laden family members to Saudi Arabia and Europe nine days after 9/11. The post-9/11 domestic flights of Bin Laden family members out of the United States with the sanction of the Bush White House were not the only instances where Americans have flown with the family that spawned "Al Qaeda" leader Osama Bin Laden. WMR has obtained a passenger list from a September 20, 2001, Aero Services private charter flight from Le Bourget Airport, north of Paris, to Geneva, and on to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (King Abdulaziz International Airport-OEJN). On the list are a number of Bin Ladens, as well as four Americans, including a Los Angeles Police Department officer named Jason Blum who flew to Le Bourget from Los Angeles. A previous list provided to Sen. Frank Lautenberg showed Mr. Blum departing from the Bin Laden party in Boston. The newly obtained list shows he accompanied the Bin Ladens to Paris Le Bourget. The other three Americans on the passenger list are J.P. Buonono, Joseph Allen Wyka and Ricardo V. Pascetta."

Although much has been written about the "Bin Laden" and other Saudi flights in the days after 9/11, the El Al flight on the afternoon of September 11 is the first instance of Israelis departing the United States while commercial traffic was grounded.

There have also been reports that the FBI seized FAA records concerning the events of 9/11 from the New York Air Route Traffic Control Center in Islip, Long Island. The ARTCC has responsibility for flights out of JFK.

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