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'Suicide Hijacker' Is An Airline Pilot Alive And Well In Jeddah

By Robert Fisk in Beirut
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A man named by the US Department of Justice as a suicide hijacker of American Airlines flight 11 - the first airliner to smash into the World Trade Centre - is very much alive and living in Jeddah.

Abdulrahman al-Omari, a pilot with Saudi Airlines, was astonished to find himself accused of hijacking - as well as being dead - and has visited the US consulate in Jeddah to demand an explanation.

None has so far been forthcoming. It is possible that the hijacker adopted Mr al-Omari's identity but, if he had been using the same false name while training as a pilot in the US, he would presumably have been uncovered.

That is not the only error on the list of hijackers. The name of Ziad Jarrah - identified as the pilot-hijacker of United Airlines flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania - was misspelt "Jarrahi". He was a Lebanese whose family, living in the Bekaa Valley, spoke to him just two days before his death but who still refuse to believe that he was involved.

Mr al-Omari's first name - Abdulrahman - was later given out by the US authorities as "Abdulaziz" but there can be little doubt that it referred to the pilot who lives in Jeddah. The Americans described him as a father of four and Mr al-Omari does have four children, all of whom live with him and his family in Saudi Arabia's second city. He has refused to talk to reporters and - in the words of one prominent Saudi journalist - "is one nervous guy".

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