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- [WORLD](#)
- [U.S.](#)
- [WEATHER](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [SPORTS](#)
- [POLITICS](#)
- [LAW](#)
- [SCI-TECH](#)
- [SPACE](#)
- [HEALTH](#)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- [TRAVEL](#)
- [EDUCATION](#)
- [CAREER](#)
- [IN-DEPTH](#)

- [QUICK NEWS](#)
- [LOCAL](#)
- [COMMUNITY](#)
- [MULTIMEDIA](#)
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CNN BREAKING NEWS

America Under Attack: List of Names of 18 Suspected Hijackers

Aired September 14, 2001 - 10:11 ET

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LEON HARRIS, CNN ANCHOR: Folks, we are going to break into this press conference by the mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani, because we have some breaking news. Leon Harris here at the CNN Center in Atlanta, but we're going now to Washington D.C., where our Kelli Arena is standing by. She has got some breaking news on the identities of those 18 hijackers.

Kelli, take it away.

KELLI ARENA, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Well, Leon, we did manage -- CNN managed to grab a list of the names of the 18 suspected hijackers that is supposed to be officially released by justice sometime later today. I will do my best to read, to read the names, some are a bit unfamiliar. On American flight 11, the first name Walid Al Shehhi (ph), the second, Wellal Sheyi (ph), also known as Wahidal Sheyi. Now we do know a little bit about him. He held a U.S. and Saudi Arabian driver's license. He had his passport from the United Arab Emirates. On his latest residences, including Daytona Beach, Florida, and not too far from here in Washington, Vienna, Virginia, and he also attended a U.S. flight school in Florida, Embrel Brittle (ph), third name, Mohammed Atta (ph). We also have information on him. He held U.S. and Egyptian driver's license. His passport also from the United Arab Emirates. He was also an attendant at the U.S. flight schools Huffman Aviation in Venice, Florida and Sim Center in Opa-Locka, and he rented a car that was later found at Boston's Logan Airport.

Abdul Ala Mari (ph) and Setam Segani (ph), Marwanal Shehhi on the list as well. They are looking an awful lot alike here, Leon. Marwan Al Shehhi, a UAE passport. Fayez Ahmed, Mahad Al Shari (ph), Hanza Al-Gari (ph), Amdad Al Dandi (ph). Let me stop here for a moment. We have a few more names to read. The way this is working out, there were five hijackers on two planes, four hijackers

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on two others. We are told by law enforcement sources that most of these names in some way connect in some way to indirectly or directly to Osama bin Laden.

Continuing on, united Airlines flight number 93, Almad Alhanawi (ph), Almed Alnami (ph), Ziad Girad (ph) and Sayd Algamdi (ph). American Airlines flight number 77. Cammid Al-Madar, and Mosear Caned (ph), Majar Mokhed (ph), Nawar Al Hazni (ph) and Salem Al Hazni (ph).

So similar last names here. Perhaps they were brothers. We were told by the investigators that they were looking for relatives, brothers who are somehow interconnected. Now of course, all of these people presumed dead. They were on those flights. They were the hijackers. The real focus of this investigation, Leon, now, is using these names and jumping forward. Let's figure out the network. The FBI is trying to figure out the network involved here. What other associates, what other terrorists cells there may be in the United States that are at work. We also know that there were terrorists cells identified in Hamburg, Germany, that there are investigations going on there.

So this is a good starting point. Again, this list not officially released yet by the Justice Department. We obtained this list of name through sources -- Leon.

HARRIS: Well, it may not be officially released by the Justice Department, but it's about to be officially released by CNN, as I'm just now learning from our producers that this entire list is going to be available on CNN.com. So folks out there in the audience, if you would like to see the names that are on this list, the 18 names of officials that are now -- will be officially saying at some point this morning or sometime during the day, the suspects that that they expected -- that they believed were on the planes and died in the crashes, those names will be available on CNN.com.

Kelli, before we let you go, is there any other information being released aside from the names, is there any information, for instance, about where they have been, where they came from, if they have been residing here in the U.S. before this incident, any other information like that?

ARENA: Well, besides the information that we gave you, we do know that many of them have trained and were licensed pilots, trained at U.S. flight schools and were licensed pilots, and we do know that many of them either resided together at various locations here in the U.S. Many in Florida. I said one here in Virginia. But we do have some more on the on the ongoing investigation, Leon. If you are curious. We have -- we did tell you last night that we had several people that were arrested at New York airports, at both JFK

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and La Guardia, and we are told now that after intense questioning of FBI members of the Joint Terrorism Task Force, that all about one of those people has been released.

We also know that in Miami's airport, sources say that law enforcement detained several people there. One woman was seen walking into the airport in civilian clothing, went into the restroom, came out in a flight attendant uniform. She was with a man who also had a flight attendant uniform. When they were approached by authorities, they ran. But they were captured and they are now being questioned.

And we also know that the U.S. Coast Guard has bordered a Carnival Cruise Line ship off of the coast of Miami earlier today. They detained two people who authorities describe as having a history of hijacking. According to law enforcement sources, that ship was boarded at 3:00 a.m. after the passenger list was checked by authorities. So this manhunt continues, Leon, around the country.

HARRIS: Let me ask you one final question, if I may. You said, going back to the case in New York, you said it was 10 or 11 that had been detained originally, and only one now is still being detained. ARENA: Our sources last night had said, at least eight people had been detained, and that number has gone back and forth. But they were questioned. They have been released, except for one.

HARRIS: Right, but the question is, is that one believed to be in any way linked to the incidents that happened Tuesday?

ARENA: It's very early to tell, Leon, in this investigation. Sometime, it's a suspected link, and many times it proves to be nothing, and I think that the law enforcement has yet to determine that for themselves.

HARRIS: Thank you very much.

Kelli Arena, thank you very much for getting that list to us.

Daryn, over to you.

DARYN KAGAN, CNN ANCHOR: We want to get more on this list, and if you're just joining us, we're talking about a list of 18 people that authorities believed were involved, were on board those planes that were hijacked and crashed on Tuesday.

Our Mike Boettcher is with us here in Atlanta. He's also working on the list, and as Leon was alluding to, Mike, I would imagine beyond the list of names and what small connections you're able to make to these planes, like rental cars and plane tickets, authorities are going to want to know a lot more as in their activities that were leading up

to their getting on those planes on Tuesday?

MIKE BOETTCHER, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Absolutely, and they want to know a lot more about what groups these people belong to. In the intelligence agencies, in this country, they have lists of people who they believe belonged to certain groups, and I am told by the intelligence sources that they believe that the lead groups in this incident, in this terrorist attack in New York and Washington. The lead group, they're looking very closely at Egyptian Islamic Jihad and other North African groups. They haven't completely made that link, but they are looking very, very closely at this. They'll be checking this, cross referencing these names against names known to be members of these various groups.

The chief person in Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Mr. Israri (ph) is a top lieutenant of Osama bin Laden. He appeared with him in a photograph more than a year ago at a meeting in Afghanistan. This group has been linked to other terrorist attacks around the world, in association with the Al Qaeda group, and always remember Al Qaeda itself is not an organized group, organized to carry out terrorists attacks. It's primarily an umbrella group. What they do is bring in other groups in other parts of the world. They sit at the corporate board, and they have these smaller companies that go out and do their work, these smaller companies, being terrorist groups like Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and also we know that bin Laden over the last couple of years or more than that has been really reaching out Algerian terrorist groups, he's used them in a number of attacks against the United States. They will be checking that list for those names as well. Now something to be careful with in this list is the fact that some of these people are listed to have certain passports. For example, Mohammed Atta is known to have carried a United Arab Emirates passport. But they're looking closely that he may not be a UAE citizen, that he may be from Egypt or some other North African country. They'll be looking at that those things as well. People are racing to go through this list and make sense of it, and really try to get to the bottom of the identities of these people.

KAGAN: Mike, what about what would be perhaps the next list? If these were 18 people who were onboard these planes, I couldn't have carried out the operation by themselves? They had to have the supporters, they have to have the handlers. Do authorities believe that these people would still be in this country?

BOETTCHER: Oh yes, absolutely. And there is yet a second yet list out there that has been distributed across the country to airlines and airports that has people that they suspect might be -- people who have provided support to these 18. Now, when a person books a ticket for example, or travels in some other means, or is stopped by police, they will be crosschecked against this list to see if they are on it. Now, some people on that list have already been cleared. But

there are many others who have not been found and they're out looking for them now.

KAGAN: All right, Mike Boettcher, thank you so much. I'm sure we are going to be learning a more as the morning goes on, so we'll checking back with you.

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