



Topline

June 6

Like 2 share 0 Tweet 0 +1 0 0 Comments

Government loan officer Johnelle Bryant says she was face to face with Mohamed Atta, believed to be the ringleader of the Sept. 11 hijackers, for hours as he requested money apparently intended to finance a terrorist plot. Here are excerpts of Brian Ross' interview with Bryant.

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

I'm a formal manager at, for a farm service agency. It's a agency, part of the United States Department of Agriculture. And my main office is located in Homestead, Florida. But my servicing area includes: Dade County, Broward County, and Palm Beach County, and, and Monroe County.

BRIAN ROSS:

And, and what is it you do actually. Is it like a, a bank sort of, or?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

It's similar. Only, it's guaranteed, it's government financed loans for agriculture, for farming, type operations. We make real estate operating loans.

BRIAN ROSS:

And so, it's open to any American Citizen to come, and?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Yes, sir. As long as they are farmers, and they do have experience farming. And they're family-size farmers. And they're unable to obtain credit elsewhere.

And how long have you been at the office in, in Homestead?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Two years. I started in Homestead, January of 2000. But I have been with my agency for 16 years.

BRIAN ROSS:

And, when did you first meet someone who you say is Mohamed Atta? What happened?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

I met him somewhere between the end of April, around the third week of April to the third week of May of 2000.

BRIAN ROSS:

Somewhere in that...

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Somewhere in that general area. I can't pinpoint it down any more than that.

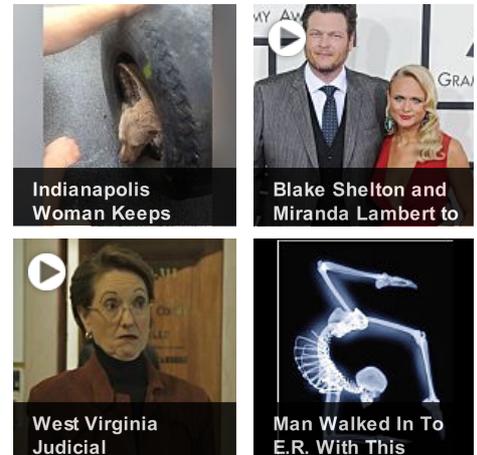
HOT RIGHT NOW



ADVERTISEMENT

abc NEWS
Your Living Room Reimagined.
NOW ON Roku

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE...



Recommended by Outbrain

PHOTO GALLERIES



BRIAN ROSS:

And tell me what happened?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

He came to my agency to finance an aircraft. A, a crop-duster.

BRIAN ROSS:

That's what he told you.

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

That's what he told me. Yes, sir.

BRIAN ROSS: What, what'd he say?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

It, it wasn't actually a crop-duster in itself that he was wanting to finance. He wanted to finance a twin-engine, six-passenger aircraft, that he could use as both a charter flights, and remove the, the seats. And he said he was an engineer, and he wanted to build a chemical tank that would fit inside the aircraft, and take up every available square inch of the aircraft, except for where the pilot would be sitting. And run the spray nozzles along the wind span. And use it as both a crop-duster plane, and as a charter plane.

BRIAN ROSS: And when he came, did he, what name did he give you?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Mohamed Atta. And I was taking notes. We typically take notes of a, it's considered an initial applicant interview. And while taking notes, I, I wrote his name down. And I spelled it A-T-T-A-H, and he told me, "No, A-T-T-A, as in 'Atta boy!'"

BRIAN ROSS:

Atta boy.

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Atta boy.

BRIAN ROSS:

And did he tell you where he lived?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Yes. We, we, actually discussed his background and what he was doing in the United States.

BRIAN ROSS:

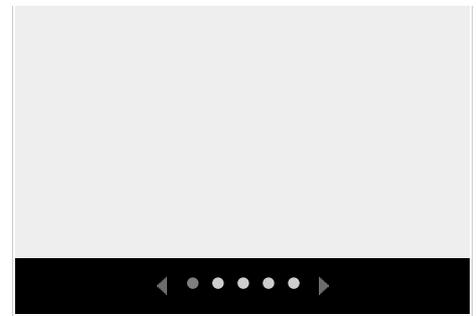
What, what'd he say?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Before we really started talking about the loan.

BRIAN ROSS:

Mm-hmm.



SEE IT, SHARE IT

	Mom Dying of Cancer Preps Cards to Toddler for Future Milestones	Heather McManamy	
	Blake Shelton and Miranda Lambert's Divorce Finalized	Jon Kopaloff/Getty Images	
	Prince George Shares a Toothly Smile With Dad	Mario Testino/Art Partner	
	Hope Waning in Search for Missing Wisconsin Physician	Door County Sheriff's Department/Facebook	
	Zelda Williams Takes Social Media Break Before Robin's Birthday	John Shearer/Getty Images	
	Meet the Man Who Was Struck By Lightning and Won the Lottery	CTV	
	See What a High-End McDonald's Looks Like	McDonalds Corp	

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

And he told me that he was originally from Egypt, I believe. But that he had actually moved here from Afghanistan. And, I believe, he told me that he moved from Egypt to Afghanistan, having to do with some kind of political pressure. But I don't, I don't remember exactly what it was. He also mentioned that he had an engineering degree and had gone to school in Germany. Because when we were talking about the aircraft, and the chemical tank, he was wanting to put in the aircraft, I, I mentioned that a tank of that size wouldn't fit through the door. And he said that he was a, an engineer, and that he knew how to solve those problems.

He told me that he had sold all of his belongings at home, to move to the United States to start his dream, which was to go to flight school, and, and get his pilot's license, and work both as a charter pilot, and a, a crop duster, too.

BRIAN ROSS: How did he know to come to you for a loan?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Oh. He told me that he had purchased a book from, off the cable TV, that advertised how to get, how to obtain a free grants, or loans from the government. And he had said that he had paid \$40 for it. And that it, it explained to him our agency, and our loan limits. Actually we have a guaranteed loan limit of \$750,000. And he was asking for \$650,000.

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

He also thought that he, all he had to do to obtain the money, was to actually just come to my office, tell me what he wanted the loan for, and that he would obtain the cash, without any kind of application processing, whatsoever. And he, when I explained to him about the application process, he became very agitated. And he said that that's not what the book said. That the book said that I, I come to your agency and that I could get up to \$750,000 in, in loan. And he also thought that the loan was going to be cash.

BRIAN ROSS:

So he believed the TV commercial. Free money from the government.

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

He actually believed, yes. He actually believed that he could walk into the office and say that he needed \$650,000 to purchase an aircraft with. And that I would give him \$650,000 in cash.

BRIAN ROSS:

So he must have been very disappointed.

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Yes, sir. He was. What, what kind of compounded that was the fact that our agency, we have a very large, very old safe. A great big black safe. And it happened to be in my office.

Yes. And he, he asked me what would, and he asked this in a rhetorically. After explaining what kind of security they had in his, in his country, he asked me what would prevent him without the, with any visual, audio security equipment, behind my desk and in my office with that safe sitting there. He asked me what would prevent him from going behind my desk and cutting my throat, and making off with the millions of dollars of cash in that safe. And, I told him that, well I kind of laughed. I mean I didn't laugh at him. But I chuckled a little bit about it. And I thought well, for one thing. I told him for one thing, there's, there's no cash in that safe. And then I explained to him about the evidence of indebtedness. And then, and he asked about, well, when you get a loan, you get cash. You get money. And you make loans so you have money. And I said, well, we do make loans, sir. However. The loans in this country come typically in two forms. You get a U.S. Treasury check, which is similar to a income tax return check. Or, it's, it's wired to your account. So it's electronic funds transfer. But we never handle cash. There's absolutely no cash in that safe. And so then he



asked me what the second thing was that would prevent him from coming behind my desk. And you've got to understand that when he said this, he said it in a rhetorical manner, as compared to the lack of security in my office, versus what he was accustomed to, at, at home. And...

BRIAN ROSS:

But, he said, "What would prevent me from cutting your throat?"

JOHNELLE BRYANT: "Coming behind your desk and cutting your throat and making, and making off with all the cash in that safe because you don't have any security in your office." And so I told him, "No, there's no cash in, in the safe, number one. And I told him number two, my, my training would prevent him from coming behind the desk and cutting my throat." And he asked me, and he kind of, he kind of, stepped back. And he said, "So you've had military training?" I said, "Oh, no, sir, I've never been in the military." And he, he mentioned something about that he understood that the United States allowed women in the armed forces now. But that he didn't understand, he didn't actually realize that, that they, they were given combat training. I said, "No, no I've never been in the military." And so then he asked me what kind of training that I had. And I told him that I took about six months of karate training. Koname Ru, karate training. And he asked what karate was. He asked if that was similar to tae kwon do. I said yes, it is, it's just a type of martial arts training. And he was very surprised that a woman would have that kind of training. And he was very interested in that kind of training. And he wanted to know how, once he became settled down, in, in the United States, how he could take that kind of training. And I told him that, just look it up in the Yellow Pages.

BRIAN ROSS:

And what did he describe, how did he describe the business he wanted to start?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

A combination charter airplanes and crop duster.

BRIAN ROSS:

And he wanted the money ...

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

To purchase the aircraft.

BRIAN ROSS:

And how much did he want?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Six hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

BRIAN ROSS:

And what kind of aircraft did he want to buy?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

He, he actually wanted to purchase a six-passenger, twin-engine airplane, that he could pull the back seats out, and build a special made chemical tank to put, put into, into the aircraft to hold the chemicals for crop-dusting, and yet remove that when he, when he needed to, and replace the seats for, in, for charter type, plane.

BRIAN ROSS:

So he wanted the plane where he could put a huge tank in the back.

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

Yes, sir. Yes, sir. And, and he mentioned that he could get a larger tank in a twin-engine plane than what he could, than the chemical capacity of a regular crop-duster plane, which he said that he could use it, to stay up in the air longer while he's spraying sugar cane, out in the Broward County area.

BRIAN ROSS:

And what did you think of that when he told you he had this plan?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

I didn't think it would work. Because crop-dusters are very agile, and they fly under high wires. And my, my stepfather actually had a single-engine, four-seater plane, that I used to go up with him, on occasion. And, it's, they don't have near the agility of a crop-duster plane. So, any kind of, I didn't think they would, that what he was suggesting would work. I thought it was a very creative idea, on, on his part.

BRIAN ROSS:

And you asked him about the size of the tank? About whether it would fit?

JOHNELLE BRYANT:

He, he I didn't really ask him about the size. He informed, he offered that information to me. He said that he wanted to pull the back seats out and build a tank that would take up all the space of the back seat. And take up all the space, except for where the pilot sat. And that way, when he went out to spray, he wouldn't have to land and reload. He could just continue spraying, which, I, it didn't make sense. But I had, I mean, prior to 9-1-1 I had no idea what else he would be wanting to do with the airplane.

BRIAN ROSS:

And did you tell him that you didn't think it made much sense?

Part II of Brian Ross' exclusive interview with Johnelle Bryant

Like 2 share 0 Tweet 0 +1 0 | 0 Comments



The \$1.5 trillion scandal Big Oil really doesn't want you to know about. *(Oxfam America)*



Do You Have Royal Blood? Your Last Name May Tell You. *(Ancestry)*



Sandra Bland's Family Orders Independent Autopsy After Alleged Jail Suicide



5 Things You Can Try Before You Buy

- **The Downsizing Checklist For The Clever Declutterer** *(Merrill Lynch)*
- **If You Ever Feel Stupid, Just Look At What These 30 People Did. You'll Feel Better...Trust Me.** *(Viral Nova)*
- **Ever Googled yourself? A popular website reveals more than major search engines, simply enter your name and state. What will you discover?** *(Instant Checkrate)*
- **10 Baby Girl Names That Used Be Popular** *(Ancestry)*
- **25 Biggest Decorating Mistakes to Avoid (Photos)** *(HGTV)*

- **See Stellar Images of the Cosmos**
- **Behold the Catloaf, Your Adorable Edible Friend**
- **Plea From the Past: Message on Door May Be From Couple Hiding During Holocaust**
- **Pricey Mini-Movies Made to Sell Mega-Mansions**
- **23-Pound, 95-Year-Old Lobster Becomes Local NY Celebrity**

Recommended by Outbrain

OFFERS YOU MIGHT LIKE

ADS BY ADBLADE

New Virginia "DMV" Rule

New Rule [GEOTSTATE] "DMV" Doesn't Want You To Know, Has Drivers Fuming...

[More >>](#)

Chantilly In Disbelief

Americans can't believe that new site is legal. Search your name before it gets banned!

[More >>](#)

Buffett Is Warning You!

When the greatest investor of all time issues a warning, it pays to listen.

[More >>](#)

JOIN THE DISCUSSION

0 Comments

ABC News

 Login 

 Recommend

 Share

Sort by Best 



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

ALSO ON ABC NEWS

Kate Steinle's Father Testifies Before Congress About His ... 96 comments

Donald Trump Gives Out Lindsey Graham's Cell Phone ... 1298 comments

Mexican Man Leaves Denver Church Sanctuary After 8 Months 5 comments

Obama Orders Flags to Half-Staff For Chattanooga Victims ... 634 comments

AROUND THE WEB

Steer Clear of these 5 Massively Unreliable Cars Motor Guides

Millennials Throwing Millions At Wealthfront TechCrunch

15 Breeds to Avoid When Choosing A Dog Dog Notebook

Do You Know What Your Weight Loss Type Is (And What It ...) RealDose Nutrition

 Subscribe

 Add Disqus to your site

Privacy

DISQUS

HOME > ABC NEWS

Yahoo!-ABC News Network



Privacy Policy
Contact Us

Your CA Privacy Rights

Children's Online Privacy Policy

Interest-Based Ads

Terms of Use

© 2015 ABC News Internet Ventures. All rights reserved.