

# Terrorists Hijack 4 Airliners, Destroy World Trade Center, Hit Pentagon; Hundreds Dead

## Bodies Pulled From Pentagon; Troops Patrol District Streets

By STEVE TWOMEY and ARTHUR SANTANA  
Washington Post Staff Writers

Rescuers fought through tons of debris in quest of victims at the Pentagon last night after terrorists seized an airliner out-bound from Dulles International Airport and plunged it into the heart of American military power, killing an estimated several hundred people.

Hampered by fires that still raged as evening fell, emergency teams had carried out only six bodies, but they were preparing to remove many more, and rescuers were using dogs and listening devices to search for people they believed might be trapped alive.

Precise figures were hard to come by because portions of the building were under construction, and many of the military and civilian personnel had been temporarily relocated, according to Arlington Fire Chief Edward P. Plaughner.

Coming less than an hour after two hijacked passenger jets slammed into the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center, the assault on the Pentagon began an unprecedented day of office and school closings, panicked phone calls, wild rumor and extraordinary security in the Washington area.

Last night, downtown streets were largely deserted as D.C. National Guard units joined police in patrolling the city. D.C. Mayor Anthony A. Williams (D), Maryland Gov. Parris N. Glendening (D) and Virginia Gov. James S. Gilmore III (R) declared states of emergency that broadened their power to govern without legislative authority.

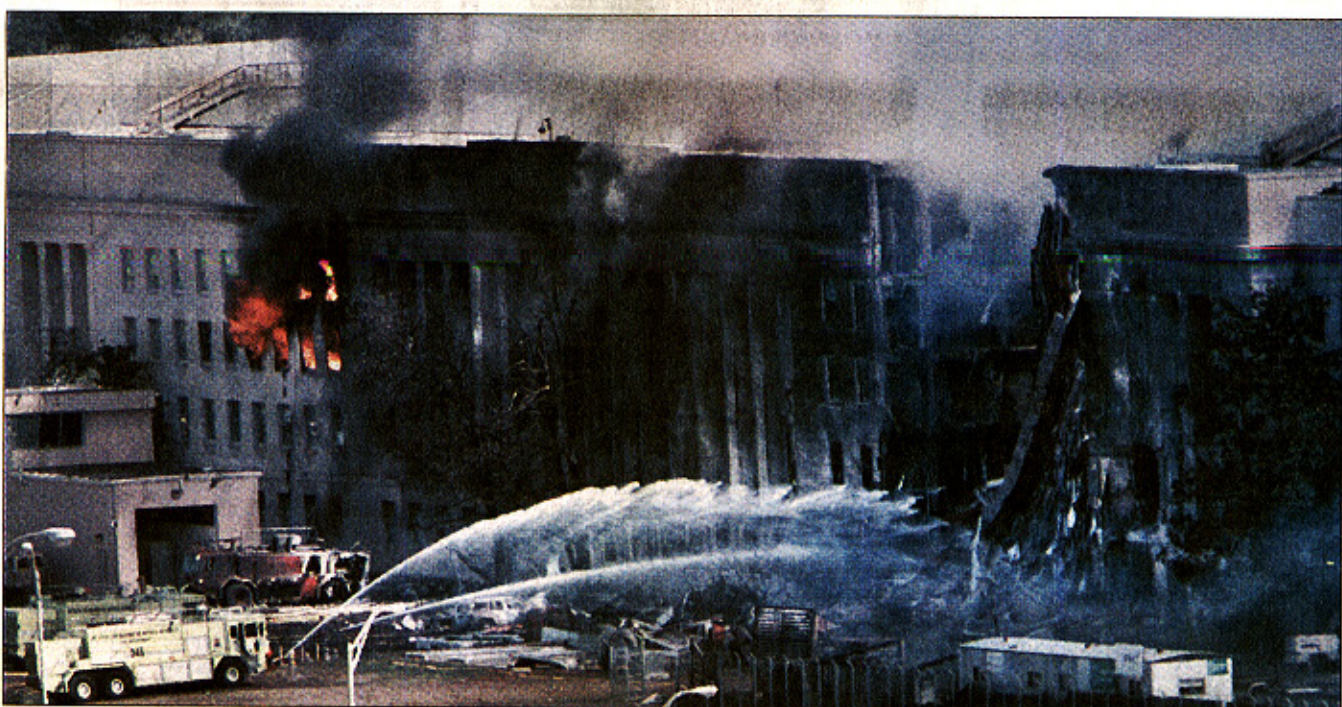
Most of the region's school systems will be closed today, although President Bush announced that the federal government would reopen, after having shut down within an hour of yesterday's Pentagon attack.

At a late-evening news conference, D.C. Police Chief Charles H. Ramsey said that the attacks here and in New York would forever change security operations in Washington and that there was no longer such a thing as "business as usual" here.

Originally headed for Los Angeles, the American Airlines Boeing 757—carrying 64 people and loaded with 30,000 pounds of fuel for the long flight to the West Coast—



Minutes after an American Airlines plane crashed into the World Trade Center in New York City, a United airliner is about to hit the complex.



Firefighters battle blazes at the Pentagon, which was hit by a plane that had been hijacked after taking off from Dulles International Airport.

## Bush Promises Retribution; Military Put on Highest Alert

By MICHAEL GRUNWALD  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Terrorists unleashed an astonishing air assault on America's military and financial power centers yesterday morning, hijacking four commercial jets and then crashing them into the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon and the Pennsylvania countryside.

There were no reliable estimates last night of how many people were killed in the most devastating terrorist operation in American history. The number was certainly in the hundreds and could be in the thousands.

It was the most dramatic attack on American soil since Pearl Harbor, and it created indelible scenes of carnage and chaos. The commandeered jets obliterated the World Trade Center's twin 110-story towers from their familiar perch above Manhattan's skyline and ripped a blazing swath through the Defense Department's imposing five-sided fortress, grounding the domestic air traffic system for the first time and plunging the entire nation into an unparalleled state of anxiety.

U.S. military forces at home and abroad were placed on their highest state of alert, and a loose network of Navy warships was deployed along both coasts for air defense.

The terrorists hijacked four California-bound planes from three airports on the Eastern Seaboard; the airliners were loaded with the maximum amount of fuel, suggesting a well-financed, well-coordinated plot. First, two planes slammed into the World Trade Center. Then an American Airlines plane out of Dulles International Airport ripped through the newly renovated walls of the Pentagon, perhaps the world's most secure office building. A fourth jet crashed 80 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, shortly after it was hijacked and turned in the direction of Washington.

None of the 266 people aboard the four planes survived. There were even more horrific but still untold casualties in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, which together provided office space for more than 70,000 people. At just one of the firms with offices in the World Trade Center, the Marsh & McLennan insurance bro-

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## Washington

### On Flight 77: 'Our Plane Is Being Hijacked'

By MARC FISHER  
and DON PHILLIPS  
Washington Post Staff Writers

There was not even the grace of instant death. Instead, there was time to call from the sky over Virginia, fingers pumping cell phones, terrified passengers talking to loved ones for one final time.

Herded to the back of the plane by hijackers armed with knives and box-cutters, the passengers and crew members of American Airlines Flight 77—including the wife of Solicitor General Theodore Olson, a Senate staffer, three D.C. schoolchildren and three teachers on an educational field trip and a University Park family of four headed to Australia for a two-month adventure—were ordered to call relatives to say they were about to die.

About an hour after takeoff from Dulles International Airport yesterday morning, Flight 77, a Boeing 757 headed for Los Angeles with 64 people aboard, became a massive missile aimed at the White House. The target would change suddenly, but the symbolism was equally devastating.

By about 9:40 a.m., when the diving plane carved out a massive chunk of the Pentagon, its passengers had experienced unspeak-



Shaken Pentagon worker Tracy Williams watches the flames.

able terror, hundreds died, and the nation's greatest symbol of security lay shattered, thick plumes of smoke camouflaging a gaping hole in its heart.

Barbara K. Olson, the former federal prosecutor who became a prominent TV commentator during the impeachment of President Bill Clinton, called her husband twice in the final minutes. Her last words to him were, "What do I tell

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## U.S. Intelligence Points To Bin Laden Network

By DAN EGGEN  
and VERNON LOEB  
Washington Post Staff Writers

The U.S. government has strong evidence from multiple sources that the suicidal terrorists who carried out yesterday's catastrophic attacks in New York and Washington were connected to Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden, who previously was linked to the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, senior officials said.

One senior official said the probability that bin Laden is behind the deadly assaults is in "the high 90s," while another U.S. official said investigators gathered evidence "strongly suggesting" that bin Laden's organization, al Qaeda, was involved.

The evidence pointing to bin Laden was gathered following the attacks in a joint effort by the CIA and the FBI, with information from domestic and overseas sources, a senior official said.

"It is more than just the analytical surmise that it would take an organization with incredible com-

mand and control capability, which bin Laden's has, to stage an attack like this," one U.S. official said. "There is other information that has been obtained after the attack against the World Trade Center pointing in the direction of bin Laden."

Unprecedented in scope and sophistication, the coordinated assault on the world's financial and political capitals caught the United States completely off guard—despite a massive intelligence and law enforcement network devoted to detecting and thwarting such attacks. With efforts focused largely on guarding against bomb threats to overseas targets, U.S. authorities conceded they were ill-prepared for hijacked jetliners purposely crashed on American soil.

Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (R-Utah), a member of the Senate intelligence committee, said he was told in a briefing that electronic intercepts yesterday showed "representatives affiliated with Osama bin Laden over the airwaves reporting that

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## New York

### 'I Saw Bodies Falling Out— Oh, God, Jumping, Falling'

By BARTON GELLMAN  
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW YORK, Sept. 11—Valerie Johnson stared, transfixed, at the inferno a thousand yards to her south and west. Tears streamed furrows through a film of ash on her face. Her mind tried to grasp what her eyes beheld: a blazing gash across the tower of wealth that symbolized New York for her all her life. The fire marched downward, floor by floor, windows bursting out ahead of the flames.

Then Johnson screamed a guttural, wordless wail. A sound like nothing she ever heard—low as thunder, but louder and longer—pressed in on her chest for ten seconds or more, resounding through Centre Street at Foley Square. The northern tower, the taller of the two, was gone. It was 10:29 a.m., an hour and three quarters after the first of two jetliners ripped through New York's twin emblems of global prestige.

"Oh God, oh God, my niece works in that building," Johnson breathed. "Oh God."

Where we stood there now came a roiling cloud—smoke and ash, ten stories tall, building speed as they reached the canyons of Manhattan's southern tip. Survivors streamed, choked and gagging, behind the cloud. Among them, stumbling



Two women hold each other as they watch the World Trade Center burn.

blindly toward the fountain at Foley Square, were Elizabeth Belleau and Melissa Morales, strangers grasping hands with all their might as they ran. Belleau plunged her head into the cooling waters and retched, coughing out ash and phlegm. The fountain enclosed a sculpture: "Triumph of the Human Spirit."

Belleau had been running for nearly two hours. Her morning commute on the BM-3 bus had stalled,

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