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9/11 hijackers set off alarms at Dulles

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Surveillance video from Washington Dulles International Airport on September 11 has four of the five hijackers being pulled aside to undergo additional scrutiny after setting off metal detectors, but then being permitted to board the flight they crashed into the Pentagon.

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The video shows an airport screener hand-checking the baggage of one hijacker, Nawaf Alhazmi, for traces of explosives before letting him continue onto American Airlines Flight 77 with his brother, Salem, a fellow hijacker.

Details in the grainy video are difficult to distinguish, but an earlier report by the commission describing activities at Dulles is consistent with the men's procession through airport security as shown on the

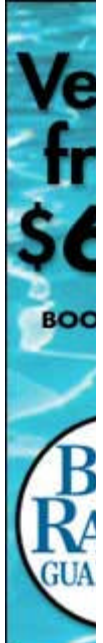
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video.

No knives or other sharp objects are visible on the surveillance video. Investigators on the commission have said the hijackers at Dulles were believed to be carrying utility knives either personally or in their luggage, which at the time could be carried legally aboard planes if the blades were less than 4 inches long and they were not considered "menacing."

Nothing indicates that security screeners questioned the hijackers about any knives.

All 64 persons aboard — 53 passengers, five hijackers and six crew members — along with 125 employees at the Pentagon, were killed when the terrorists crashed the plane into the Pentagon at 9:39 a.m. on September 11.

The video shows hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Majed Moqed setting off metal detectors as they pass through security. Moqed set off a second alarm, and a screener manually checked him with a hand-held metal detector.

The pair were known to travel together previously and had paid cash to purchase their tickets aboard Flight 77 on Sept. 5, 2001, at the American Airlines counter at Baltimore-Washington International Airport.

Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi had been known to be associated with al Qaeda since early 1999 by the National Security Agency, and were put on a terrorism watch list Aug. 24, 2001.

Only Hani Hanjour, believed to have been the hijacker who piloted Flight 77, did not set off a metal detector as he passed through Dulles security that morning, according to the video.

Moments after Hanjour passed alone through the security checkpoint, the final two hijackers, the Alhazmi brothers, walked through the checkpoint.

Nawaf Alhazmi, described by investigators as the right-hand accomplice of hijacker-planner Mohamed Atta, set off two metal detectors, and a screener manually checked him with a hand-held device.

The two were directed to a nearby counter, where airline personnel appeared to examine their tickets while another screener checked Nawaf Alhazmi's carry-on bag with an explosive trace detector.

The Associated Press obtained the video from the Motley Rice

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law firm, which is representing some survivors' families who are suing the airlines and security industry over their actions in the September 11 attacks.

"Even after setting off these alarms, the airlines and security screeners failed to examine the hijackers' baggage, as required by federal regulations and industry-mandated standards, or discover the weapons they would use in their attack," lawyer Ron Motley said.

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