



THE FIFTH HIJACKED PLANE

Working at the World Trade Center on 9/11 and living in Long Island, I always recalled there was a **fifth plane** called out as hijacked, and it was in Long Island. Almost instantly, however, all references to the fifth plane disappeared. Today, few remember even a mention of a fifth plane, and the 9/11 Report; not only has no reference to it, it disclaims that a fifth plane was possible. Now, it is fairly certain there **was** a fifth plane. Here is what I've uncovered:

United Airlines Flight 23 was the potentially fifth hijacked plane on September 11, 2001. While only four planes were successfully hijacked and crashed, Flight 23—a Boeing 767 scheduled to fly from JFK International Airport to Los Angeles—was grounded on the tarmac just as the attacks unfolded, leading crew members and investigators to believe it was an intended fifth target.¹

Reports, investigations, and media coverage details surrounding this flight include:

The Incident Aboard Flight 23

- **Suspicious Passengers:** According to the pilot, Tom Mannello, and the flight crew, four first-class passengers' behavior raised immediate alarms. After the plane was ordered back to the gate due to the grounding of all U.S. airspace, the passengers

¹ <https://www.floridabulldog.org>

allegedly became argumentative, refused to stay seated, and eventually fled the aircraft into the terminal.^{2 3 4}

- **Unclaimed Luggage:** The flight dispatchers later reported that the suspicious passengers never claimed their luggage. When searched, the bags allegedly contained Al Qaeda documents and incriminating materials.^{1 2}
- **The Box Cutter Mix-up:** A plane parked directly next to Flight 23—with a tail number only one digit off—was searched later that morning. Authorities discovered two box cutters hidden in the seat pockets of its first-class cabin. The flight crew believes ground accomplices accidentally staged the weapons on the wrong aircraft.^{1 3 4}
- **The Open Hatch:** After the plane was evacuated and locked, crew members reported seeing two unauthorized people in uniforms inside the cabin. Ground authorities later found an open floor hatch under the plane that led directly into the belly of the aircraft.⁴

Official Government Responses

- **The 9/11 Commission Report:** The final official public report by the [9/11 Commission](#) does **not** mention United Airlines Flight 23 or a fifth plane. Commission investigators stated at the time that their chronological mapping of the plot did not leave room for a fifth aircraft.^{1 2 5}
- **Active FBI Investigation:** In July 2023, the FBI formally acknowledged through public records requests that it maintains an active investigative file regarding the attempted hijacking of Flight 23.^{1 6}
- **Withheld Records:** The FBI has repeatedly denied freedom of information requests to release the full records of Flight 23. The agency stated that releasing the documents could interfere with ongoing "enforcement proceedings," likely referring to the prolonged military tribunals at Guantánamo Bay involving 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed.^{6 7} This is not the only withheld file; the FBI has withheld the

² <https://whyy.org>

³ <https://www.audacy.com>

⁴ <https://nypost.com>

⁵ <https://www.independent.co.uk>

⁶ <https://www.govtech.com>

⁷ <https://www.bostonherald.com>

original recording of the Flight 93 crash, citing it as an open investigation. The transcript is available, but the recording is not.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **TMZ Investigates: 9/11: The Fifth Plane:** A dedicated television documentary produced by TMZ on Fox featuring direct interviews with Flight 23's pilot, Tom Mannello, and flight attendants detailing the morning's events.
- **9/11: Mystery of the Fifth Plane:** A prominent investigative special broadcasted internationally on [Channel 5](#).
- **"Touching History":** A thoroughly researched aviation book by author Lynn Spencer that outlines the real-time response of civilian air traffic controllers and mentions the grounding anomalies at JFK.
- **The Florida Bulldog:** Investigative journalism organization [Florida Bulldog](#) has published extensive articles detailing the legal battle with the FBI to declassify the Flight 23 files. ¹

So, that's the story of the fifth plane. Please comment if you remember the reports or are just curious about this story.

