



Steve & Bogdan vs. The FAA

INTERVIEWER: Start with you Steve, how would you like to be identified?

STEVE ELSON: Retired Navy and former FAA Security Inspector. Not retired but former.

INTERVIEWER: Former. Okay. And Bogdan? Former FAA?

BOGDAN DZAKOVIC:
FAA Whistle-Blower, current TSA employee.

INTERVIEWER: So you work for the TSA now. Okay. Are you gonna get in trouble for this?

BOGDAN: Probably. I mean, how much can they hurt me, you know?



INTERVIEWER: Let me start with you, Bogdan. Tell me where you were on 9/11, what you were doing that morning.

BOGDAN: On the morning of 9/11 I was actually at our headquarters, and I was engaging in an argument with the Chief of Staff. It was a minor argument. A personnel thing. I was acting Mayor during the office, and someone came into the office when we were having this minor argument and, told us to turn on the TV. And so we turned it on, and we saw the first tower aflame.

Well as soon as I saw that it was good weather, I knew it wasn't an accident. And my immediate gut reaction was extreme anger directed towards the FAA and the government in general, rather than the terrorists. And the reason for that is, I knew, for years prior to this, that there are bad guys out there that wanted to do something like this.

And I, as well as other people, tried to get our senior management to beef up security a little bit so that this wouldn't happen. So actually my anger was directed towards the people in government that knew that something like this was gonna happen, and they did nothing.



INTERVIEWER:

Steve, where were you that morning?

STEVE: I was in New Orleans where we lived at the time and I was driving to the Navy Commissary to do my weekly shopping, passing the dome to go to the commissary. I heard on the news that a commuter plane had hit

the World Trade Center. Shortly thereafter a friend of mine called me, a third person who worked with Bryan Sullivan in Massachusetts, telling me what had happened. And that large planes had hit the World Trade Center.

I guess I had a hysterical reaction. I just started laughing. And I said those lousy FAA bastards, we told 'em. Those traitors let us down, they killed people as we said they would.

The FAA. Jane Garvey, Cathal Flynn, Mineta, Rodney Slater, Secretary of Transportation. I think they're traitors. I've called it to their face and that's the way I feel. They're welcome to sue me if they don't like it.

INTERVIEWER: You both were FAA Red Team members? Tell me what it meant to be an FAA Red Team member.

STEVE: Well I came in, I was recruited into the FAA as a Red Team member. I've been the operations officer and executive officer of the Navy Seal Team's Red Team. And, I had a background, I was working for DEA at the time, and I thought it'd be a good opportunity to get out in the field. I like operating, I don't like staff jobs.

I didn't know much about FAA at the time. I learned that the FAA standard field testing was all a facade to make things look good. So it afforded us an opportunity to go out and find out what was really going on out there. And we in fact found out that rather than ninety-two to ninety-six percent success rate in security, the failure rate was about that high.

INTERVIEWER: Bogdan, what kinds of things did you do? Did you find the same thing? You guys worked together?

BOGDAN: No, Steve and I first met; I think it was in like '93. I was a team leader in the Air Marshal program, and he was a team leader in the Red Team, and we were co-located in the same office space, but we had very little interaction at that time.

He did his secret stuff in the Red Team and I did my secret stuff in the Air Marshal program and we had very little overlap. But it wasn't until in '95, I transferred from Air Marshal program to the Red Team and Steve had just quit a few months before I started.

And as time went on, about the first two years of my tenure as a team leader on the Red Team, I really got to see how bad security was everywhere we went. And we did work, almost on every continent, except Antarctica. And a lot of work domestically. And virtually everywhere we went, security was very, very poor.

And I found out that nobody was doing anything to correct the problem, and then it was roughly in '97-'98 that Steve and I started working together, because we just started talking at one point and some of the same problems he identified in the early nineties, I was finding the exact same issues not being addressed, as late as '97-'98.

The type of testing we did was everything from submitting explosives through the latest bomb detection equipment, through screening checkpoints, doing profiling internationally. Virtually every aspect of security we tested. Cargo security, small package security, and none of it worked. It literally all was a facade.

And the only thing that would stop us from getting caught in an airport was pretty much if it was bad luck on our part.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of things did you find, Steve?

STEVE: Same thing that Bogdan was finding years later. We pretty much looked at the across the spectrum of aviation security, and we looked at it as a system. Most people in America, unfortunately, tend to look at the screening checkpoint, you know, that's what's visible.

We found tremendous failures across the spectrum. Red Team was originally set up after Pan Am 103 was... Some good people, Secretary of Transportation, the Administrative FAA and the head of FAA security, just had this feeling that what they were seeing from the standard FAA testing out in the field wasn't what was going on.

So they commission a Red Team, and I was between the first and second groups. And we started off doing checkpoints. We did cargo security, we had looked at breaches, we looked at, you know, badge display, baggage, just everything. And it was completely the same across the board; it was all a big farce.

You could get almost anything you want at will without an effort.

INTERVIEWER: So when 9/11 happened, what did you figure?

STEVE: You know, I said well, we were expecting something. It doesn't matter, I said the whole system at FAA security was so flawed, it was just a matter of how the terrorists wanted to do it. And they picked that method, and again, it was extremely easy to prevent that from happening.

BOGDAN: The only thing that surprised me on 9/11 was, that it took so long to happen. I expected it to occur a year, even earlier prior to that. And, my anger was directed towards the government.

INTERVIEWER: Was Mary Schiavo Inspector General at this time?

BOGDAN: No.

STEVE: She- well she was-- Mary Schiavo was the Inspector General. We in the FAA admired her, although we felt she was hardcore and devoted as she was, she didn't even have a real good taste of how bad things were, as to security. But she's one person not afraid to go out and look and probe and find out what was going on.

INTERVIEWER: So you think it was worse than what she thought?

STEVE: Oh, far worse.

BOGDAN: She was not the IG, the Inspector General, when I was in the Red Team. I forget when she quit. It was like '94, '95. Something like that.

INTERVIEWER: So you were saying what you were surprised about on 9/11...

BOGDAN: Yeah, the only thing I was surprised about is that it didn't occur earlier. Because the intelligence threat was out there long before September 11th, and as early as, '94, I think, it was called the Bojinka operation, it was where terrorists were gonna blow up a dozen U.S. airliners over the Pacific Ocean.

That should have been the first warning sign to the government that the face of terrorism has changed. That it went from, you know, hijacking the occasional plane and doing a media circus out of that, to killing large numbers of people.

But FAA pretty much ignored that situation, and it was just a fluke fire that started in the apartment building where they were making the explosives. That saved those people's lives. And then in '95, terrorists hijacked a French flag airliner and, the pilots convinced the terrorists that they didn't have enough fuel to reach Paris.

And the French government took the initiative on this, and they received information that the terrorists were gonna crash the plane into the Eiffel Tower. So they initiated a commando raid and took out the terrorists when they were in Marseilles, if I remember right.

And those two incidents right there should have been a major eye-opener to people engaged in the intelligence and security field. But it went right over their heads.

INTERVIEWER: You saw things that were wrong. Did you try and tell somebody?

Yeah. I personally went through the chain of command numerous times. My immediate boss reported directly to the Associate Administrator for Aviation Security who was Cathal Flynn at the time. And he reported directly to the Secretary or to the Administrator of FAA, who was Jane Garvey.

She in turn obviously reported directly to the Secretary of Transportation, and he reported directly to the President. And so, when I wrote one of my reports, through my chain of command, it went from me to my boss to the Associate Administrator for security. And, I mean, you can't get too much higher than this. But that went nowhere...

It was a standard government kind of report. You know, what we did. What kind of results we got; it was basically just, you know, one failure after another, with an occasional success. But those were really rare.

But there were detailed reports on what we did in the Red Team and, you know, by the time September 11th happened, we had about five safes full of documentation from every trip, going back to 1990, I think it was. And it was report after report about how bad security was.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel? What were you thinking, what were you doing?

BOGDAN: Well, I got so frustrated that I started working outside the chain of command and Steve and I joined up in '97 or '98, working outside the chain of command. He has his own story to tell about trying to work through the chain of command. But I realized it was a complete waste of time.

We talked to a guy named Todd Zinzer, who was in charge of their Criminal Investigations Division. And he is now the number two individual in the Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General. And we gave him several inches worth of documentation, you know, piles of paper, plus talked to him on several different visits.

And he got so exasperated with us at one point that, I remember the look on his face. He just kinda threw his arms up and says, FAA is so screwed up I don't know where to begin.

But Steve and I didn't stop there, and actually went through the general accounting office, and the individual we talked to there was the head guy, Gerald Dillingham who I have the greatest respect for. He was a very dedicated civil servant. Very concerned about what we had to say.

In fact he was so concerned about our allegations and stuff that he actually had Steve and I brief him for an entire day. He and his entire senior staff of around twelve, fifteen people. And I had to leave about halfway through, because I had to go to work. I still work for these people.

But, one of the things they explained to us is that they have no authority to actually do anything. They get their marching orders directly from the Congress of the United States, and until they actually are tasked with an investigation or something there's nothing they can do.

Steve and I, we didn't stop at that. So we started going to the individual members of the House and Senate, both parties, that were on the various committees that oversaw FAA security and the aviation industry, and we started giving them the same documentation that we'd given everybody else up the chain of command.

And, one of the things that did result from this was, the House-- The House Appropriations Committee has their own, specialized investigative unit called the Surveys and Investigation Staff, I think it is. They initiated an investigation into FAA security in '99, took about nearly a year to complete this and they came up with the same abysmal results about aviation security that we already provided them information on.

I tried to get a copy of this report, but one of the investigators told me that, their reports are so highly classified that even the staff members and other Congressmen aren't allowed to see these. They go directly to the Congressmen themselves, and so there was no way that I would get a copy of this report.

And then 9/11 happens and everybody acts like this is a great big surprise, and we didn't know anything about it, and one of the key things that in any investigation of this type, you ask three basic questions - what did you know? When did you know it? And what did you do about it?

And what people knew goes all the way up to the Congress of the United States, as well as the President, because, you know, a lot of this information was routed through the Secretary of- Secretary of Transportation. So a lot of people knew about these problems and did absolutely nothing.

INTERVIEWER: Steve, what is your story leading up to 9/11?

STEVE: If I can kind of summarize or percolate it down... Something that we've written, preached, dared people to challenge us on, begged them to say something-- I'll say that had there not been one single iota of intelligence information.

BOGDAN: No FBI, no NSA, no CIA, any of those. Events of 9/11 were virtually 100% preventable - quickly, cheaply and easily - with nothing more than a piece of rope out of a garbage can and very few simple procedures. It was totally needless. And it doesn't matter one iota whether there was specific information or not.

STEVE: I think the 9/11 Commission has distracted the 9/11 families and the American public from what's really at hand. If you go after an organization like the CIA, the FBI, a government organization which is not a regulatory agency, has no money attached to it, the only thing that can be said is, we didn't do well - we the CIA, FBI - because we didn't have the assets.

So what happens? They get more money, more assets. We're talkin' about FAA, which is a regulatory agency, was like the FDA, it was just tied to money. The airline industry, which is huge. Look at the amounts of money contributed to Congress and the White House, and it doesn't matter the party, and it doesn't matter which president was in, it's all the same. There's no difference.

And 9/11 - everybody's trying to hang their hat. Condoleezza Rice, all Bush, all these people. "*There was no specific information.*" Specific information means absolutely nothing in this case and I can explain this easily.

An analogy: Banks started taking money years ago to save for people. They didn't have specific threats.

Jesse James and Billy the Kid, Bonnie and Clyde, were gonna rob a bank. But they knew there was a vulnerability. So you want to look at the vulnerability first. You start closing off the vulnerability, okay. The president of the United States, no matter who's in the White House, the sitting president is always under a general threat of being assassinated.

Yet the Secret Service doesn't just sit back and let the president wander around the streets and go flying on planes. They have very stringent security. They don't wait for a specific threat. They take action because they know there's a generalized threat. The FAA knew long, long ago that there was tremendous vulnerability in the cockpit.

That the doors were not hardened. Ms. Schiavo spoke at the 9/11 Commission. They gave her about three minutes. I don't know how she did it, but she presented just an amazing plethora of information on cockpit breaches. And the question was, how come the FAA didn't do anything about it?

We've said for a long time that the FAA knew about the cockpit vulnerabilities going back into the early nineties, but we had no way to really get it on the record until the 9/11 Commission. Timothy Roemer, I'd send a copy of this white paper to him, and if you read this I defy anybody to dispute that, I think this lays out clearly what happened and why.

At any rate, he invited me to submit questions. I submitted several pages. And one question I wanted asked was, what did you know about cockpit door vulnerability and what did you do about it? And at that hearing was Claudio Manno, who was the Intel Chief, Jane Garvey who had been the Administrator, and Cathal Flynn, the most guilty person of allowing 9/11. He'd been the Security Director of the FAA.

Roemer didn't ask the question and I asked one of the widows' wives, because the 9/11 families could submit questions. I said, would you please submit this? She did. And I believe it was Slate Gordon, I'm not sure, asked about that issue. I thought it was gonna go to Flynn. Garvey jumped up and said, "Oh, that was an issue that was known long before I got to the FAA and it was addressed."

And I think we did nothing about it because there was an issue of decompression, you know, in the plane. Even Flynn grabbed his face, and Slate Gordon said that's stupid. The FAA damn well knew about those vulnerabilities. So what they had to do was harden the cockpit. Now another issue was the issue of capitulation. Why do pilots- why did they give up their cockpits?

Because the entire FAA hijacking procedures were predicated on 1970's Cuba Aero hijackings. Those people were criminals but they weren't terrorists. They wanted to go home. They had no interest in destroying the United States and, very interesting, United States didn't want terrorists.

Since 1970, many things changed. The geopolitical nature of the world, the Soviet Union's gone, Berlin Wall's gone, technology's changed. Nothing looks like the 1970's except for the FAA's procedures on hijacking. Capitulation. We had many instances during the eighties and nineties that showed terrorism wasn't the same.

And yet that's what the FAA was telling the pilots to do. So if they had hardened the cockpit...

INTERVIEWER: Did you all suggest hardening it?

STEVE: I did in 19 -- well I don't want to say where I was. I was in the military and I worked on TWA 847. I didn't know anything about security. I recommended that and using non-lethal disabling gas in the plane. But the one thing's a little hazy here; many people think that the in-flight problems, such as cockpit door, fell under security.

They didn't. It fell under the flight standards, and it was real confusing. We in security were kind of delving into that area and there was a move about 1998 for FAA to take it. But Flynn wanted more assets to do it. But it was an issue we all knew about and we did address.

BOGDAN: The first time I was aware that this issue was actually brought up through the chain of command was roughly in 1991 or '92. And there actually are a lot of very good, dedicated people that worked for FAA and now work for TSA. But we're all stuck in the same bureaucracy that just doesn't work.

But it was roughly 1992 when someone formally sent a document through the chain of command saying you need to harden the cockpit doors. And even at that time, we only had around fifty air marshals. I came in as a team leader in '93, and I mean it- we were so small it wasn't even a token force.

But it was as early as '92 when hardening the cockpit doors was formally brought through, to the senior level management in FAA. And they did nothing.

STEVE: I wrote a paper when I was a field agent in Houston after I left the Red Team, and I left for some political issues. I was a field agent in Houston and I wrote a lot papers to the headquarters generally through the chain of

command. Often I had to bypass people because they wouldn't pass it along.

I wrote it to Cathal Flynn and I said, we're antiquated in the way we're approaching it. We need to go back and look at what the threats are - general and specific. We need to look at priorities and what we need to do. We're wasting our time, you know, dealing with issues that have nothing to do with security.

And of course, nothing happened there. But the basic issue again is that a hardened cockpit door-- and again, you could've taken a piece of rope and tied the door shut. You could've told pilots-- And what I recommended that time wasn't, don't tell the pilots not to open the door. Brief the pilots on the real world situation, what the threats are - general, not specific.

Prepare them to be able to make an intelligent decision on whether they should give up the cockpit or not. For instance, if somebody comes and wants to get into the, you know, hijack a plane and say I've got a bomb, pilots are generally gonna capitulate and take 'em where they want. Why- what was the need to let them in the cockpit?

And there were a couple of procedures using onboard equipment, it would cost virtually nothing that could've stopped 9/11. The pilots with various, a- a dump valve to de- decompress- or depressurize the cabin. Various maneuvers within specific gravity limits so you don't rip the wings and the flight control to surfaces off the plane.

Could've got the plane on the ground and probably a few people in the back might have been killed. But if the pilots had done that, if the FAA had insisted on that, the hijackers could not have gained access to the cockpit. If they couldn't have gained access to the cockpit, it would have been impossible for the events of 9/11 to occur.

It's that simple. It's got nothing to do with all this intelligence and al Qaeda, it's a very simple, basic point defense that any organization - whether it's the White House, the military, the police - has. FAA was point defense. Intel reaches out over the oceans. Border patrol and coast guard look at our borders.

Point defense is always something you have whether it's on a ship, a military base, the White House. That's what the FAA was, point defense. And the easier you are to the center, to the target, the easier it is to defend. The FAA simply refused to it.

Congress knew this. The letter that Bogdan wrote and a lot more, we took to Congress. We gave John McCain, Senator Stevens, Rockefeller. We gave them a book about four hundred pages, chalked with this information including the letter he wrote.

Not a single one of them did anything. On September twenty-ninth, twelve twenty-three central daylight time in New Orleans in the year 2000, I put a letter in John McCain's hand in front of a witness, telling him, I was not a whistleblower, had no protection. Went to the IG, went to Congress simply because it was the right thing to do.

BOGDAN: Typically, in FAA, particularly if you're a manager, there's a revolving door where, once you retire as an FAA manager, you can go to work for an airline, if you played the game right.

We had roughly five safes full of documentation, going back ten years. Documenting how bad aviation security was, with virtually no improvement in the previous ten years.

And I also had a number of witnesses, that provided documentation. My own report was around two hundred fifty pages, and then my witnesses provided roughly another two hundred fifty pages of documentation. And after the OSC received my five hundred pages of rebuttal, they essentially agreed with my allegations. And in their cover page to the President, they said that FAA operated in a manner that was a substantial and specific danger to public safety. That's what it was.

A substantial and specific danger to public safety. And three thousand people, three thousand sixty-six, I think, is the last count I heard, of how many died on 9/11. And nobody's been held accountable. A lot of the managers in FAA security have actually been promoted, either within FAA or within the Transportation Security Agency, which subsequently took over the job of aviation security.

INTERVIEWER: Are we any safer today?

BOGDAN: No. But another thing you have to understand about aviation security is, the whole system is designed to process passengers as efficiently and as quickly as they can. Otherwise you have to arrive at an airport, you know, three days in advance to get everything checked out.

So that is one flaw in the system which the bureaucrats and the politicians don't understand. As a terrorist, and we proved this in the red team, all you have to do is spend, literally, no more than a couple hours doing surveillance at an airport, and you can figure out how to beat the so called layers of security that we have. And the one real deterrent, in my opinion, based on my seven years as a red team leader, the one real deterrent against aviation-related terrorism is people doing human profiling.

And profiling, contrary to what the news media likes to paint up, profiling is not, in this case, anybody that looks Arab, within a certain age group is taken off to the side and given the third degree. Profiling, if it's done correctly, is you have a highly trained individual that engages in a conversation with the prospective passenger.

If they do it right, within a matter of two minutes, if that, they can determine if a person's a potential dirtball or is just a regular passenger. And, but that is the one area of security that TSA isn't even looking at. Because they prefer these technological layers of security, as they call it. And none of it's going to work, other than relying on Divine intervention.

INTERVIEWER: Besides profiling, what would make us safer?

BOGDAN: I mean, you still need these technological devices. You know, the bomb detection machines, the screening checkpoint. But without the profiling, it's all for naught. And I said, years ago, that literally a sophomore class in high school could figure out how to burn down the aviation industry in this country overnight as a class project.

And it wouldn't take a whole lot of money. They could get the money in a bake sale. And it literally would be that easy to do. And you recall the college student a couple of years ago--

He basically proved the thing. He was kind of doing a cry for help. He was sending e-mails and letters to TSA, begging them to look at their security. And, you know, they just ignored it. And he put harmless items, but they could have been potentially life threatening items on airplanes. And they were flying around for over a month before TSA found them.

STEVE: Standard FAA testing was done in accordance with rules and equipment agreed on by the carriers. They knew the guns. They knew the agents. So they already knew the tests were coming, they knew what was going to happen. That's why they had a ninety-six percent success rate.

The FAA told us that, "Based on the Red Team's creative, out of the box approach to testing, its findings were deemed not suitable to civil enforcement proceedings because the FAA red team's techniques went far beyond standardized criteria applicable to field regulatory units."

Now, what that says that what we in the Red Team found, in my day and Bogdan's, could not be used to open cases. That's okay. The issue wasn't opening cases. Nothing was fixing it. So what'd they do? Not one damn thing. My favorite is, "Based on the no-rules nature of the Red Team's testing techniques, which were more in keeping with the actions that might be taken by terrorists, and were not subject to FAA standardized protocols that limited Kaspoz and Kaslov, the FAA held that Red Team findings were not suitable for civil enforcement proceedings."

In other words, we were too much like the terrorists, so they didn't want to use our results. That is a question, who the hell was the FAA protecting against? And I was told in the field that the, the mission of the FAA field agent was to keep the Department of Transportation Inspector General off airplanes so we were not embarrassed in the newspapers and Congress.

Congress knew this, the DOT knew this, the FAA knew this. All the hierarchy, they knew it. And yet they did absolutely nothing. That's why I said they were traitorous bastards and let us get killed on 9/11. They did. And I can show you the people we took all this stuff went to Congress. Post-9/11, we've got the same problem with the TSA. I went all over the country proving, on tape, that we can get guns, knives, bombs through.

STEVE ELSON: Do you want us to tell us how to fix it today?

BOGDAN: If all you do is check to make sure they don't have any knives and guns on them, I mean, it really doesn't accomplish anything. But CAPS One, they got rid of, and they started CAPS Two. That doesn't work any better than CAPS One. And so they got rid of that. And now they have the third system, Secure Skies, I think they call it now. And that's not going to work any better. And I guarantee they're going to spend another hundred million dollars coming up with Secured Skies, I Really Mean It This Time or something like that. And it's not going to work any better.

What you need is human profilers that are actually trained to look at everything, from signs of nervousness to the ticketing. Engage in a conversation with people, see how many people are traveling together, you know, on the

same flight. And this is something that could be fit into the apparatus or the infrastructure of aviation security without a major inconvenience to the passengers.

But TSA doesn't even want to look at this. It's like we're so technology oriented that-- And as I mentioned before, these so called layers of security that we have, which are technological layers, that are designed to process passengers as rapidly as possible, with just a little bit of effort, surveillance and testing on your part, you can figure out how to beat every single one of these stages fairly easy. And, the bureaucrats in TSA and the politicians are completely oblivious to anything that's not technology driven.

INTERVIEWER: I'm supposed to get on a plane tomorrow--

BOGDAN: Take a train.

INTERVIEWER: So, your bottom line about the 9/11 Commission Report, what would you say your bottom line is?

BOGDAN: The best I could say about it is they, they really botched the job by not really going into the, the real failures. From the CIA, the FBI, FAA security. All these were bureaucratic failures that each agency failed royally on. But they didn't even address why this occurred.

At worst, I think the 9/11 Commission Report is treasonous. And if you look at what the word "treason" means in the Webster's Dictionary, it's a betrayal of a trust. And these people were entrusted to do a in-depth report on what led up to the 9/11 attacks. And how it could have been prevented and, and the steps to take to improve aviation security and, and the basic anti-terrorism, counterterrorist stance we have in this country.

STEVE: I agree with that. Let me just say one thing. Bogdan did deal with the issue of profiling. Okay. One thing I want to get away from, and actually get focused on again, is the system. Let's just say that you could go into an airport and, in five minutes, you could be from the front door, through the screen checkpoint to your gate. And you've gone through profiling, you've gone through all the machines, and they're a hundred percent effective, efficient, reliable.

They don't take your clothes off, they don't molest you, your shoes stay on. You just go right through and all these systems work. Would you feel better? Most people say, "Yeah." Well, I'm telling you what I believe, and I'd be

willing to prove it again. That I can take the people in this room and a few of us, and we go to airports around the country, we don't have to have a ticket, we don't need to go through profiling, we don't need to be in a computer. We can literally walk out onto the ramps and throw bombs in the cargo hold of planes.

And we can do that at a couple of airports. One day, we can kill thousands of people. We can put the airline industry out of business. And all that other stuff just plain doesn't matter. If you don't look at the whole system, you're going to fail. Terrorists don't look at one place. They're nothing more than Special Operations people. I know the Special Operations people in this country don't like it, but if you look at what they do, they're Special Operations.

TSA, the government's looking backwards, these guys are looking forwards. Why go through all that? What they want to do, I assume, the same thing we did when I was a Special Operations. We want to get to the target, minimize time on target, minimize exposure, and get out. Now, they're willing to die. We could go into planes and put bombs, and go through the checkpoint and get explosives on the plane and get off and blow up the plane. We don't have to get killed.

Let's use the checkpoints America's familiar with. We take a bunch of sticks and cardboard and duct tape and we seal off the checkpoint where nobody can see anything. And then we take each station - station being the X-ray machine, the metal detector and attendant people - and we seal that off. And each separate function, whether it be hand wand, baggage search, trace detector, we seal off.

So you now, as a terrorist, just like Mohammad and all the boys did up in Boston, I think at the same time I was up there in April, now they go through. What can they see? They can see what happens to them. They don't know if the same thing's happening everywhere or not. We reconstruct the checkpoint so that people can't get away. The TSA's designed checkpoints so breachers can get away. It's been in the news, Dallas, San Francisco, Atlanta. Somebody will go in, they'll have their bags wiped.

You've seen the little machine, the explosive trace detector? Where are those at? Usually at the back of the checkpoint. So they take you. You and I are standing there. I'm the screener. "Ma'am, may I open your bag?" You say, "Sure." Open the bag. And all of a sudden, you panic. Zoom! You run into the terminal. Like a guy did in Frisco and left his shoes. Or a guy did in Atlanta, or people, did in Dallas.

They got away. Okay, how do we fix that? We reconstruct the checkpoint-- You're not old enough, but I'm old enough to remember cowboys. We'll head 'em off at the pass. So you build this enclosed structure to a pass. And then you and I come in. "Now we're going to my room, ma'am. I'm going to look at your bags." I don't want you to have access to your bag because what if we open the bag and you've got a grenade and then you panic? You grab the grenade, pull the pin, it's got an instantaneous fuse.

What are we going to do now? Shoot me? Or shoot you, if you're the terrorist? You may not kill people in the plane, but you sure will blow the heck out of the checkpoint, and that'll dissuade people from flying. So what I'm going to do is, I'm going to bring you in there. I'm going to get a table between us. If we want to spend a whole lot of money, we can go out to a nice place and buy some Plexiglas, drill holes, put it between us. You're now watching me. We've got visual contact, oral, oral contact, "Ma'am, may I look at your bag?" "Sure." I start opening the bag.

All of a sudden, you panic. You now are no longer have access to the terminal. And if you go into Dallas, if you go into San Francisco, you're not in one concourse like Washington National, you've got the whole dang airport. They won't find you and they don't. TSA probably says, "Oh, well. They do reverse screening at the other end. Who cares?" So you now panic and you decide to run. Can you reach into that bag? No, you can't, because we've got a physical barrier.

Now you start running. I don't profile you, but I'm going to look at you, because I did this in Houston before 9/11 with the airlines. And I'm going to say, "Breacher! Breacher! Breacher! Running!" So I'm going to give an oral, or I'm going to point. "Lady. Brown dress. Brown jacket. Glasses, brown hair." You're going to be doing your OJ Simpson imitation. Only where are you going to go?

I know it because I did it and so did he. So all we do is, go down to Home Depot and get some of that little translucent paint. It's got light. But you can't see out in the ramp. You can't surveil and you can't see what's going on. That's going to make life a lot more difficult. And all we're doing, in security, is the same thing they do in flying. We're risk managing and we're trying to change the odds.

You see, flying's inherently dangerous, but through a lot of federal aviation regulations, Part 916143, 125, et cetera, they've managed to reduce the risk in flying, according to DOT, Department of Transportation, that the only

mode of transportation safer than airline travel is an oil pipeline. Yet, in security, we went the opposite way.

We had fire, civil aviation, regulation, 107, 8, and 9. TSA changed the name. It's supposed to reduce risk by allowing people to see these things. By playing these stupid games. By putting all this information out in the public, TSA's increasing our risk. Your chances of getting killed tomorrow are remarkably, remarkably small. I wouldn't even worry about it. We should worry more about, is being molested at the checkpoint, or having some Air Marshall wake up and shoot you.

I'm more afraid of Air Marshals than I am terrorists. The cockpits are locked. And if pilots aren't going to open the door, why do you need an Air Marshal or a gun on the plane? Why a gun? Why do you need a gun on the plane? I've watched Air Marshals. You've seen them, people have seen them, you can identify them. I took pictures of some on the flight this summer. I could have gone over and stabbed a pencil through his head and taken his gun and killed people.

I don't need to bring weapons on the plane, they put them on the plane. They have oxygen bottles, they're not locked up. Now, they say no more matches, but with an oxygen bottle and a match, I've got a tremendously harmful weapon. Pilots are afraid of a fire on the plane. So all this is just a bunch of hogwash to make you feel better, while doing nothing of substance. But it can be fixed easily.

BOGDAN: One of the things we identified in the red team, and I documented this in my whistleblower disclosure, is that the training that FAA oversaw for screeners, was kind of-- I was thinking up another word other than "ass backward." But the way they train people was, "Here's what an image of a gun looks like on an X-ray machine. Or this is what a grenade looks like."

What we should be training people to do is to look for things, when they see an X-ray image or doing a hand search or something like this, if something looks out of the ordinary, they should take that aside and do further testing on it. And this was one of the major reasons we had such failures when I was a red team leader, is because of this type of training. And FAA didn't want to change it. But what happened after September 11th is, TSA contracted out with-- Who, who was it? One of the major companies.

Lockheed-Martin, I think it was. They had a multi-million dollar contract to train the screeners on how to use an X-ray machine. But did anybody ever

ask, these companies that were involved in this, what they knew about screening? I mean, they're very good at putting a five hundred pound bomb through your chimney, but when it comes to training people, they didn't know how to train them.

So I would virtually guarantee that they're trained the same way as they were before September 11th, which is not to find stuff that doesn't belong on a plane, other than the standard what a gun looks like or a knife or whatever. They're not looking for the type of items that could be hidden, we call them opaque objects, something that could hide a potential object. And that's always been one of the major flaws in the actual mechanics of how screeners operate.

And one of the other things is, the only way to actually test to see if the system actually works is by having an aggressive red team doing the type of activity that a real terrorist group of people would do. But TSA doesn't have that.

And they do have people doing testing, but when I testified at the 9/11 Commission, I called it a pink team because it's, it's not an aggressive red team using the tactics the terrorists would use. And that's because TSA doesn't want to document how bad security is. And so they're not even testing the way they should be.

That said, the pink team's still successful in getting stuff through. And we talked about the, the opaque test object. This is almost all TSA. And that's why they use lead dome shield bags. The purpose of an X-ray screener is to look at an X-ray monitor, hopefully expedite you're going through without sticking their dirty gloves in your personals.

And with near a hundred percent certainty, proficiency, professionalism, ascertain that there's nothing untoward or dangerous in that bag. They look for guns. As he said, they look for grenades. I'll use a big lead bag. All you get is a big black blob. That doesn't look threatening, they let it go. What's in that bag? Well, I had film, so I don't do anything illegal. But it could have been a gun. And, just as importantly, the way I would stack these-- In all these, they use the same protocol with every reporter.

STEVE: They're going to have clothes, usually a hair dryer, clothes-- A hair dryer or an apple and an orange. Clothes, lead bag. And the purpose was-- A lot of times, they finally got the idea after we beat the TSA up so many times, "Look in the lead bag." Sort of. But if they didn't go any further,

down to where the hair dryer was. Hair dryer, bigger than a nine-millimeter pistol. Orange is the size of a grenade.

So if they just looked in the bag, and that's all, then they left the grenade or the gun. And out of about a hundred and thirty to a hundred and fifty of these assessments around the country in a two-year period, the failure rate, just stopping and opening the bag and looking at the lead bag, was about seventy-two to seventy-three percent. The failure rate for going through and do the whole bag completely was about ninety-two percent. And the failure to control the bag, and I did this on camera, so that somebody couldn't reach in and grab a grenade out, was a hundred percent. And the TSA was called every single time. And we told them how to do this.

INTERVIEWER: This is after 9-11?

STEVE: Yeah, this is-- All TSA. It's all documented on tape. And it's easy to fix. And the screeners are fine. You talk to the screen-- I love the screeners. I've seen them bust their tail, a lot of them are great people. They don't know what to do. And if you told them, if they'd listen to Bogdan for thirty minutes when they brief the FSDs, most of the stuff could not have happened.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you guys.

BOGDAN: Can I say something about, my whistleblower things?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

BOGDAN: A couple months after the Inspector General's office came out with their final report on my case, I happened to bump into an official from the Department of Transportation who was very familiar with my case. And we had a quick talk. And he agreed that it was a joke, what the IG did. And, and I mentioned the name of the head investigator and I said, "Is he the one that falsified this report?"

And my contact looked me right in the eye and he went like this, indicating it was someone above his head. And I could tell he didn't want to be quoted by me or anything. so I mentioned the name of, the head of the Criminal Investigations Unit, if it was-- if he was the one that falsified it? And he just went like this again. So I mentioned his supervisor, which was, the Inspector General, himself, Mead. And he went like this.

And I said, "You mean the Secretary of Transportation, Mineta?" And he went like that. So this is how high the corruption, because there isn't any polite word for it, how high the corruption goes into this. There is a major cover-up and denying the information to the American people of who knew what, when they knew it and what they did about it. It goes all the way to the top.

STEVE: The White House knows about 9/11, they know about all these failures. That's why Bush, Quayle, fired Blale, The White House knows about these failures in TSA. That's why Bush fired the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General. Congress knows, the White House knows, these agencies know. Americans think it's good they're taking off your shoes, they're lifting your breasts and separating and feeling, it's all garbage.

You get explosives right through the checkpoint today. And nobody will listen. And it's easy, easy, easy to fix. If we can't deal with the simple issues, we'll never fix the complicated ones.