

(A) Drinking alcohol

(i) The Shuckum's episode

Shuckum's is (or was) a restaurant and oyster bar in Hollywood, Florida. According to numerous news reports, Mohamed Atta and Marwan al-Shehhi spent hours at that bar a few days before 9/11, heavily drinking alcohol.

When did this episode took place?

On September 5 and 6, 2001 (FBI 302-reports released in 2009)¹ ; on September 6, 2001 (NBC News, September 12, 2001)² ; on September 7 (Associated Press³ and New York Times⁴ , September 12, 2001; Sun-Sentinel, September 13, 2001; Daily Mail (UK), September 16, 2001); on September 8 (Boston Globe, September 23, 2001; Time Magazine⁵ , September 24,2001; St. Petersburg Times⁶ , September 1, 2002); or on September 8 or 9 (Cox News, September 12, 2001)⁷

What took place at Shuckum's?

Tony Amos, Shuckums' manager, declared to Ken Thomas of Associated Press on September 12, 2001 that "two men", one of whom Mohamed Atta, had each consumed several drinks and had given the bartender a hard time. Amos said: "The guy Mohamed was drunk, his voice was slurred and he had a thick accent."⁸ Bartender Patricia Idrissi said to St. Petersburg Times that the men were "wasted" when they entered the bar. She said she directed them to a nearby Chinese restaurant. They later returned and "each ordered five drinks", she said.⁹ According to the New York Times of September 12, 2001, the "man (...) drank Stolichnaya vodka for three hours".¹⁰ Bartender Patricia Idrissi said that the men argued about their bill. Then one of the men pulled a wad of \$100 and \$50 bills, paid the tab and left her a \$3 tip. The bar employees said FBI agents had told them that at least one of the men was from Pakistan and that passenger manifests showed they were on one of the hijacked planes that took off from Boston.¹¹ Patricia Idrissi told journalists "Mohamed said he worked for American Airlines and he could pay his bill."¹²

In another account of this episode, Atta "played video games" and the other two, one of whom was designated as Shehhi, "had about five drinks each". In that account Tony Amos reportedly said that it was Shehhi, and not Atta,

who "pulled out a wad of cash and put it on the bar table and said, 'There is no money issue. I am an airline pilot'."¹³

The reports agree on two main facts: (a) that the patrons drank heavily; and (b) that they made a fuss before paying their bill.

When did the FBI visit Shuckum's?

According to the St. Petersburg Times of September 13, 2001, FBI agents arrived at Shuckum's "soon after the attack", meaning not later than in the afternoon of 9/11.¹⁴ This is corroborated by the New York Times.¹⁵ It was never explained how the FBI knew by the afternoon of 9/11 that Atta and al-Shehhi had at all frequented bars, let alone a particular bar among the approximately 48,000 bars that operate in the United States¹⁶ or the roughly 4,000 bars that exist in Florida alone.¹⁷ Was the FBI lucky, or did it have the men under observation before 9/11?

How was this episode linked to the crime of 9/11?

The drinkers were identified by Shuckum's staff as Mohamed Atta and Marwan al-Shehhi, who were later designated as two of the 9/11 suicide pilots. According to NBC of September 12, 2001, "FBI agents [were] showing Atta's passport photo to the bar staff."¹⁸ According to the New York Times of September 12, 2001, "federal agents arrived at the seafood restaurant and bar and flashed pictures of the man and one other who they said were suspected of being involved in the terror attacks (c) that morning"¹⁹ Anthony (Tony) Amos, Shuckum's manager told media: "[The FBI people] just said these guys were on the manifest on a flight out of Boston, and I knew what it meant. They said the guys were dead."²⁰

How did the FBI deal with the decidedly un-islamic conduct of Mohamed Atta?

Among the documents sent to the 9/11 Commission by the FBI and released in 2009, we found three strange FD-302 reports relating the Shuckum's episode. All three reports are significantly at variance with what media had reported. The FBI documents contain accounts of interviews of Shuckum's employees conducted *on the very day of the attacks* by unidentified FBI special agents. According to these documents, Shuckum's employees were shown photographs of Mohamed Atta and Marwan Alshehhi. These

documents, examined below, are surprisingly not identified by unique document numbers and the names of the agents are redacted.

In one of these reports²¹ an unidentified female interviewee, after being shown the photographs of Mohamed Atta and Marwan Alshehhi, reportedly said she "did not recognize Alshehhi, however she stated Atta was in Shuckum's on Wednesday, September 5, 2001." This particular FBI report does not mention Atta or Alshehhi drinking alcohol or making a fuss about the bill.

In another report²² an unidentified female interviewee at Shuckum's reportedly said she "did not recognize Atta [but] did recognize Alshehhi and stated Alshehhi was in the restaurant with another man on Thursday, September 6, 2001 (...) between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m." She also reportedly stated that Alshehhi "sat at the end of the bar, did not speak English well and was very rude. Alshehhi complained about his bill, paid in cash and left. [The interviewee] heard Alshehhi state they were going to a Chinese restaurant." In this report, too, no drinking is mentioned.

In the third report²³ an unidentified male employee reportedly said that he "recognized Alshehhi as a patron of Shuckum's *on or about* Thursday, September 6, 2001." The interviewee stated that Alshehhi "was accompanied by another male of middle eastern descent." He described Alshehhi "as being confrontational and (...) arguing with the bar tender." The interviewee "did not recognize [the photograph of] Atta." Here, again, no drinking is mentioned.

Apart from the discrepancies between these three FBI reports and the glaring omission of the fact that the sighted men engaged in heavy drinking, it is extraordinary that the FBI was able within hours of the attacks to locate a bar in Florida that Mohamed Atta and Marwan Alshehhi were patronizing and could already flash photographs of these men.

How did mass media deal with the decidedly un-islamic conduct of Mohamed Atta?

The initial story of the Shuckum's binge seriously undermined the official legend that the perpetrators of 9/11 were fanatic Muslims. The story had, therefore, to be sanitized. On September 16, the Washington Post reported from Shuckum's that "Atta played video Trivial Pursuit and blackjack with great determination", while "Al-Shehhi and the other man had about five

drinks each".²⁴ Six days later, alcohol disappeared completely from the story. According to the Washington Post of September 22, the manager on duty that night has said that he doesn't recall seeing Atta drink alcohol.²⁵ On September 27, another newspaper of record, the Los Angeles Times, reported Shuckum's owner now saying that "Atta sat quietly by himself and drank cranberry juice and played a video game, while al-Shehhi and the other customer tossed back mixed drinks and argued."²⁶ The final nail in the coffin of the Atta's binge was hammered on November 12, 2001, as ABC Australia broadcast a short interview with Tony Amos. Amos now said:

[T]he third gentleman, Mohamed Atta, was sitting at the other end of the bar and he was playing video games...Mohamed Atta, he was just drinking cranberry juice. He'd get up once in a while, come over to – who I found was this Marwan, was his cousin or claimed to be related in some way, and he would just maybe say something in his ear and then go back to the other end of the bar and just continue playing the video game. And he did that for four hours.²⁷

Tony Amos may have been coerced to retract his original testimony or journalists deliberately doctored his account. Author Daniel Hopsickeeer discovered weeks after 9/11 that Tony Amos and Patricia Idrissi, who were the source of the above reports, stopped working at Shuckum's and had vanished. Almost ten years later, the Miami Herald discovered Tony Amos as owner of El Sloppy Taco in Brunswick, Md., who apparently confirmed the original account he gave on Atta and Alshehhi. He emphasized to the Herald that at the time, FBI agents had shown him photos of Atta and Alshehhi and told him that "they were on the [flight] manifests".²⁸

(ii) The Longboat Key episode

A local paper, The Longboat Observer, reported on November 21, 2001 that a bartender at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites at Longboat Key, Fla., Darlene Sievers, had seen Mohamed Atta four days before 9/11 drink rum and Coke at the bar.²⁹ She said she remembered his face because of the sizeable tip he left her. Atta gave her a \$20 bill for a \$4 drink and let her keep the change. She said she reported her encounter with Atta to the FBI after she saw Atta's picture in the media September 27, 2001. A waiter at the same restaurant, Frank Boyal, also remembered Atta and his companion. Mark Bean, Holiday Inn's assistant food and beverage director, remembered Atta's companion, Alshehhi, after he saw the pictures of the alleged hijackers on television. Asked whether Bean and Seavers were

interviewed by the FBI, Special Agent Sara Oates said she "cannot confirm or deny that." Darlene Sievers confirmed to Daniel Hopsicker these stories. The episode of Atta and Alshehhi at Longboat Key was echoed in great detail by the St. Petersburg Times of July 4, 2004 (#178). She said to the journalist of the paper: "[the FBI] called me twice and did spend some time out at the Holiday Inn – I felt they were taking it seriously", although she says she never heard anything more. Sievers remained "convinced" that one of the men was Mohamed Atta: "I can remember people's drinks and I'll never forget those piercing black eyes", she said.

(iii) Drinking in the Philippines

The very pious Atta and Alshehhi apparently indulged in alcohol and sex before coming to the United States. According to the New York Times of October 5, 2001, Mohamed Atta and Marwan Alshehhi, two of the alleged suicide-pilots of 9/11, spent time in the Philippines in various visits between 1998 and 2000.³⁰ They reportedly stayed at a popular resort hotel, drank whiskey with Philippines bargirls, dined at a restaurant that specializes in Middle Eastern cuisine and visited at least one of the local flight schools.

Gina Marcelo, a former waitress at the Woodland Park Resort Hotel, said Alshehhi had thrown a party with six or seven Arab friends at the hotel:

They drank Johnnie Walker Black Label whiskey and mineral water. They barbecued shrimp and onions. They came in big vehicles, and they had a lot of money. They all had girlfriends...[but] they never tipped. If they did, I would not remember them so well.³¹

Victoria Brocoy, a chambermaid at the same hotel, recalled Mohamed Atta:

He was not friendly. If he asks for a towel, you do not enter his room. He takes it at the door...Many times I saw him let a girl go at the gate in the morning. It was always a different girl.³²

Another person who recognized Atta from photos was Ferdinand Abad, who was working there as a security guard in mid-1999. He remembered Atta asking at what time he should wait outside the hotel for a van to take him to the Angeles City Flying Club. Still another person who remembered Atta was Trudis Dago, manager of the Jerusalem Restaurant in Angeles City. He said Atta "would never smile and would never talk to anyone except his friend. I knew this face when I saw it in the paper", she said.³³

None of these drinking episodes could be explained by the need of these individuals to "blend into American society". These episodes demonstrate, however, that the persons who presented themselves in the USA and the Philippines as Mohamed Atta and Marwan Alshehhi, enjoyed drinking alcohol. Were these the same persons who were known in Hamburg as strict Muslims?

1. FBI FD-302 document Nr. 265D-NY-280350-MM, of September 11, 2001. Author's document #355; FBI FD-302 document Nr. 265D-NY-280350-MM, of September 11, 2001. Author's document #356; FBI FD-302 document Nr. 265D-NY-280350-MM, of September 11, 2001. Author's document #357. The FBI documents do not carry an identifying number.
2. NBC, September 12, 2001, 6:42:15. Cached on September 11 Television Archive at <http://www.archive.org/details/nbc200109121841-1922> , (last visited January 2, 2011)
3. Ken Thomas, Feds investigating possible terrorist-attack links in Florida, Associated Press, September 12, 2001, <http://web.archive.org/web/20030402060235/www.nctimes.net/news/2001/20010912/10103.html>
4. Dana Canedy and David E. Sanger, Hijacking Trail Leads F.B.I. to Florida Flight School, New York Times, September 13, 2001, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/13/national/13SUSP.html> (last visited January 2, 2011)
5. Johanna McGeary and David van Biema, The New Breed of Terrorist, Time Magazine, September 24, 2001, at <http://www.time.com/time/covers/1101010924/wplot.html> (last visited January 2, 2011)
6. Thomas C. Tobin, Florida: terror's launching pad, St. Petersburg Times, September 1, 2002, at http://www.sptimes.com/2002/09/01/911/Florida_terror_s_lau.shtml (last visited January 2, 2011)
7. Eliot Kleinberg and Colleen Mastony, FBI agents follow leads in Florida cities, Cox News Service, September 12, 2001
8. Associated Press, supra
9. Barry Klein, Wes Allison et al, FBI seizes records of students at flight schools, *St. Peterburg Times*, September 13, 2001, http://www.sptimes.com/News/091301/Worldandnation/FBI_seizes_records_of.shtml . Author's document #525.
10. Dana Canedy, New York Times, supra
11. Daniel de Vise, Curtis Morgan and Manny Garcia, On Terror's Trail: Five Florida Men Were Among The Suspects They Were Listed Aboard Planes in N.Y. Crashes, The Miami Herald, September 13, 2001, Final Edition
12. Associated Press, Feds investigating possible terrorist-attack links in Florida, The August Chronicle, September 12, 2001, at http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/2001/09/12/nat_319250.shtml
13. Amy Goldstein and Peter Finn, Hijack suspects profile: polite and purposeful, Washington Post, September 14, 2001 (author's document #68)
14. Barry Klein, supra
15. Dana Caneday, New York Times, supra (Federal agents arrived at the restaurant "late Tuesday")
16. Number of bars and restaurants in the US, at <http://answers.google.com/answers/threadview/id/762475.html>
17. Number of bars and restaurants in Florida, at http://www.manta.com/mb_43_C4_10/restaurants_bars/florida
18. NBC, supra

19. Dana Cadeny, NYT, *supra*
20. *Ibid.*
21. FBI FD-302, document #355. *supra*
22. FBI FD-302, document #356 *supra*
23. FBI FD-302, document #357 *supra*
24. Joel Achenbach, 'You Never Imagine' A Hijacker Next Door, Washington Post, September 16, 2001, at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A38026-2001Sep15¬Found=true> (last visited January 2, 2011)
25. Peter Finn, A Fanatic's Quiet Path to Terror, the Washington Post, September 22, 2001, at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A6745-2001Sep21¬Found=true> (last visited January 2, 2011)
26. Carol J. Williams, John-Thor Dahlburg and H.G. Reza, Mainly, They Just Waited, Los Angeles Times, September 27, 2001, at <http://web.archive.org/web/20010927120728/http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-O92701atta.story> (last visited January 2, 2011)
27. *Liz Jackson and Quentin McDermott, Transcript: A Mission to Die For, ABC Australia, November 12, 2001, at <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/atta/transcript.htm> (last visited January 2, 2011)*
28. Elinor J. Brecher, Mastermind may be gone, but troubled memories linger, Miami Herald, May 5, 2011, at <http://www.miamiherald.com/2011/05/05/2203576/mastermind-may-be-gone-but-troubled.html>
29. Shay Sullivan, Two Hijackers on Longboat? The Longboat Observer, November 21, 2001. Author's document #177
30. Don Kirk, Filipinos Recall Hijack Suspects Leading a High Life, New York Times, October 5, 2001. Author's document #176
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*