

**STATEMENT OF NYDIA GONZALEZ TO THE NATIONAL
COMMISSION ON TERRORIST ATTACKS UPON THE UNITED STATES**

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, a day that forever will be remembered as one of pain and anguish for our nation, I was the Operations Specialist on duty at American Airlines Southeastern Reservations Office in Cary, NC. As an Operations Specialist, one of my responsibilities includes monitoring emergency situations and forwarding information to American's System Operations Control ("SOC"). I am here to share and describe an emergency call that will be etched in my memory for the rest of my life.

At approximately 8:20 in the morning on Tuesday, September 11th, Betty Ong, an American Airlines flight attendant, called our reservations office requesting assistance with a situation on American Airlines Flight 11. Before I describe her call, let me tell you about this brave and courageous individual. Betty Ong, affectionately known by her family and friends as "Bee," was a flight attendant with American Airlines for fourteen years. She was a very caring, warm and loving person. Her zest for life; her passion for her job; her ability to make people laugh; and her concern for mankind is what truly made her, along with her fellow crewmembers, our first heroes of September 11th.

In a very calm, professional and poised demeanor, Betty Ong relayed to us detailed information of the events unfolding on Flight 11. With the assistance of her fellow crewmembers, she was able to provide us with vital information that would later prove crucial to the investigation. Betty's selfless acts of courage and determination may have saved the lives of many others. She provided some important information which ultimately led to the closing of our nation's airspace for the first time in its history.

For approximately 23 minutes Betty patiently told us that she thought they were being hijacked because two or three men had gained access to the cockpit and the cabin crew couldn't communicate with the pilots. She informed us that two flight attendants had been injured and a passenger might have been fatally stabbed. She indicated that there wasn't a doctor on board but that they were able to administer oxygen to one flight attendant and that she was able to breathe. Although she wasn't

able to give us a description of the attackers, she told us the seat locations of these individuals, which helped law enforcement authorities identify the terrorist attackers. The teamwork displayed by Betty and her fellow flight attendants, combined with their extensive training in safety and security, enabled them to relocate the passengers to an area of the cabin out of harm's way.

Several media accounts of what occurred on Flight 11 claimed that Betty was "hysterical with fear," "shrieking" and "gasping for air." I am here to tell this Commission that those accounts are wrong. As I previously stated, Betty was calm, professional and in control throughout the call. I honestly believe after my conversation with Betty that the 81 passengers and 9 crewmembers on Flight 11 had no idea of the fate they were to encounter that day.

Betty, we are here to commemorate you. Your acts of courage on September 11th will never be forgotten. On that day, not only did you have a team of fellow employees in the air; you also had a team pulling together on the ground in Reservations and Security. Your loving family, your American Airlines family and your friends are extremely proud of your selfless actions, and I, for one, will be forever grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to know such a truly remarkable person. On that day you asked, "Pray for us." As I assured you then, I will assure you today, "we are," absolutely!