

CNN SATURDAY MORNING NEWS

More Information on the Attempted Terrorist Attack

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(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

T.J. HOLMES, CNN ANCHOR: Hey there. Good morning, everybody, from the CNN Center on this CNN SATURDAY MORNING for December 26th. I'm T.J. Holmes.

BROOKE BALDWIN, CNN ANCHOR: And good morning. Thanks for being with us. I'm Brooke Baldwin, sitting in for Betty this weekend. Hope you've had a nice long holiday. We are up early, and perhaps you are, as well.

Maybe you're heading to the airport, maybe you're dropping your loved ones off. A lot will be changing in the airports this morning because of this top story we're all over. The White House is calling this attempted terror attack on board this Northwest Airline from Amsterdam to Detroit. A lot's being affected today.

HOLMES: Yes, this is going to change things on this holiday weekend. The story is and the first picture we're seeing here.

That man, 23-year-old, in the white t-shirt there, being taken in by security officials aboard that plane. His name is Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab. And he is a Nigerian suspect. He is now accused in this terrorist attack. Allegedly try to set off some kind of device aboard a plane that had originated in Amsterdam and was landing in Detroit.

The plane landed without major incident, I should say. Everybody on board was OK for the most part. The people got off and moved on on their way. But this man sustained all kinds of burns -- pretty serious burns to his body, specifically his leg where this device was attached.

This picture you're seeing is the first picture we are seeing and exclusive here to us at CNN of this suspect, taken by another passenger who was aboard that plane. We do want to head to Detroit now.

Our Deborah Feyerick is standing by the airport where this incident took place.

Deb, how have things changed so far there this morning? Just give us the update.

DEBORAH FEYERICK, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Well, T.J., we can tell you this

morning that a senior U.S. official is telling CNN that, in fact, the 23-year-old Nigerian is, indeed, talking to the FBI. It appears that he's a lone jihadi, though the FBI is making sure to rule out whether he was or was not part of some larger al Qaeda plot acting perhaps acting as an al Qaeda operative.

The question right now is: how did this man get this material on board, not just one plane but two planes? A senior official tells us that, in fact, it does not appear he did any sort of secondary screening in Amsterdam. The man came from Lagos, Nigeria, stopped in Amsterdam, which is a very a busy hub, and then continued on here to Detroit.

Another big question officials are trying to answer, that is: why did he wait until he was just minutes from the Detroit airport to try to light that explosive? And why did the explosive allegedly not detonate? Why did it simply just catch fire?

Now, the man was sitting in his seat that was close to a window seat, 19-A. He was subdued by passengers, but you can imagine there were some very frantic moments onboard that flight as people heard a popping sound followed by smoke.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ELIAS FAWAZ, WITNESS: What we heard in the beginning was a bang, sounded first like a balloon being popped. And then -- and then there was, a minute later, there was a lady shouting back and she was saying things like, "What are you doing? What are you doing?"

And then we looked back, there was a struggle. I think it was about five rows back on the left of where we were sitting. And we saw like fumes and then there was a flame fire coming out. And it was another man that jumped and the assailant, I think, the guy who was responsible.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

FEYERICK: Now, the FBI has alerted the Transportation Security Administration, the people who do the security at the airports as to the type of material that was used as part of this explosive. We do not know what the material is. But apparently, the security at airports across the country has been alerted.

I popped into the airport here into Detroit on my way and saw that the lines were very, very long. It appears screening is going to be a lot tougher. We are told there's going to be a heavy -- heavier police presence. There's going to be additional screening to all of this. People are going to be checked out, not only going through security, but also at the gates -- any suspicious behavior.

And of course, there's going to be an additional presence of those bomb-sniffing dogs just to pick up on any sort of chemicals. But, again, we don't know what kind of materials were used and whether, in fact, they're a kind of material that would set up sort of a radar,

whether they can be assembled and together be made into something clearly dangerous -- T.J. HOLMES: All right. And, Deborah, before we let you go, we want to pick up on something -- pick up on something you said that we're all trying to get some clarity on, which is how much security this man went through in Lagos and then in Amsterdam.

In Lagos, of course, they've been criticized there for the lack of security and screening at the airport, even though they have, according to officials, gotten up to international standards. But still, even after he left Nigeria, when he got to Amsterdam, you said he didn't go through secondary screening. And we're trying to understand what that means.

Does that mean, once he went through security in Nigeria, that was the only time he was ever screened as a passenger, and when he got to Amsterdam, he was just in the secure area so he got to board? Or does that mean he just didn't get a higher level of secondary scrutiny in Amsterdam? Did he go through any security in Amsterdam?

Can you try to answer that question? We're trying to get some clarity there.

FEYERICK: Sure. Well, you know, I spoke to somebody who is in charge of security at airports here in the United States, very familiar with the procedures. And you know, when you come into the U.S., for example, you first have to go through customs, regardless of whether it's your final destination. You have to go through customs, then pick up your bag, and then go through really an additional level of screening.

It appears that did not happen in Amsterdam. That once he was in Amsterdam, he was able to transit directly. But again, all of that is under investigation right now.

And one thing you have to remember, T.J., is whether, in fact, the materials he was carrying would've set off some sort of a radar, what kind of materials they are. Were they simple household products that perhaps he was able to mix while on board that plane? That's something -- having covered terrorism and security for a long time now -- that's something that officials talk about a lot. And that is, if you have a little bit of everything, can you pick up more items in order to make something?

Again, how he got this material on board the plane, whether it would have set off any radar, all of right now is under investigation. But clearly, the good news is the fact that he does appear to be talking to FBI agents. He was talking, in the words of one official, quote, "a lot." So, we should have a bit more information later on.

HOLMES: Deb Feyerick, thank you so much for that clarity. That's an important detail to get about the level of screening that he got. So, it's possible that the only time this man went through anything security-wise was in Lagos, in Nigeria. So, that's important detail. I know we're still working to get some more clarity.

But thank you so much for clearing that up and being on the story there in Detroit. We'll check in with you again. BALDWIN: And a lot of us really have questions about this whole incident in this investigation -- President Obama perhaps one of them. He has been

briefed. He is on vacation right now in Hawaii. But he has gotten some details during a secure phone call with some of his aides. And the president also apparently has had a discussion with key security advisers.

Senior White House correspondent Ed Henry traveling with the president in Honolulu has more on that side of the story.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ED HENRY, CNN SR. WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Brooke and T.J., senior officials tell CNN that the White House believes this was an attempted terror attack. And that's why, even though he's on vacation here in Hawaii, the president has been getting secure briefings from the White House Situation Room back in Washington all the way here to Hawaii so he can stay on top of the situation.

It all started on Christmas morning around 9:00 or 9:30 in the morning here in Hawaii. That's five hours back from the east coast where the president decided to convene a secure conference call with two of his top aides. John Brennan, his principal homeland security adviser, as well as Dennis McDonough of the National Security Council staff.

We're told by White House spokesman Bill Burton that on that call, the president ordered federal officials to do everything they can to increase aviation security all around the country. Officials say that could mean more canine dogs at security check points.

It could mean officials taking a closer look at behavior, looking for people who may be acting suspiciously. Obviously, all this could cause more delays at airports during what has already been a very frustrating holiday travel season. But administration officials say that security is paramount, obviously, in this situation.

The White House very sensitive also to making sure the president is on top of this situation even while he's on vacation. He's obviously been talking a lot about the economy, health care in recent weeks and months. But the president himself has said publicly and his aides repeat privately that protecting the American people is always his first priority -- Brooke, T.J.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

HOLMES: All right. We're going to bring in our terrorism analyst -- CNN terrorism analyst Peter Bergen, a friend of our show here on CNN SATURDAY and SUNDAY MORNING.

Peter, we've got a lot of questions for you. I'll start with the first that a lot of people are going to have on their minds, which is: does this appear to you -- again, we've got a lot of questions to answer -- but so far in what you know in all of your experience and what we know of past plots and what we know of this one: isolated incident or part of something bigger that we need to be on the lookout for that more could be coming?

PETER BERGEN, CNN TERRORISM ANALYST: Well, the suspect has already reportedly volunteered the fact that he got the device in Yemen, which implies probably an al Qaeda link. It also implies a larger conspiracy, since somebody had to build this thing for him.

And in the Richard Reid case, the so-called "shoe bomber" which happened roughly the same time in 2001 during the Christmas holiday season, Richard Reid also had -- there was another guy, something that's forgotten, a guy called Sajid Badat, also a British citizen, who also had that shoe bomb. He never went through with the plan. He's now in jail in Britain.

But, you know, in the case of Richard Reid, there was more than one shoe bomb out there. It would be only prudent to make sure that there aren't other terrorists like this guy who have just been arrested in Detroit. And certainly, he -- by his own admission, he's part of a large conspiracy.

HOLMES: Yes. Should we be taking him at his word? And why -- I mean, he's singing like a song bird. And so, quickly, should we be taking him at his word? Why in the world is he talking so much?

BERGEN: Well, you know, some people volunteer very quickly. Ramzi Yousef, you may recall, was the guy who bombed the Trade Center in 1993. When he was arrested in Pakistan, he volunteered the whole story to the FBI agent who arrested him, a gentleman by the name of Brad Garrett. He gave him chapter, song, and verse about the whole plan, the whole -- the whole attack.

So, you know, people react in different ways. Is he telling the truth? Who knows? But, you know, right now, I'm taking it as that yes, he did get this device in Yemen.

HOLMES: OK. What are we now going to learn from this?

And one of the things we possibly learn about a possible hole in security, in where we're still worried about here in this country and rightly so about terrorists getting into the country, from getting into the country and then putting together a plot from within.

But maybe not enough scrutiny for those just simply getting on board an international flight and maybe blowing up a plane while they're just over the U.S. once the plane gets here. They don't have to worry about getting through customs or anything. They just get over a U.S. city and blow up a plane.

Does this reveal now something we need to start looking at a little more?

BERGEN: Well, back in 1994, Ramzi Yousef, who I just mentioned to you, the guy who led the attack in Trade Center in 1993, actually assembled a bomb on a plane in Asia, got off the plane, the bomb blew up, and killed a Japanese businessman.

So, the idea of assembling a bomb on the plane has been out there for a long time. Ramsey Yousef was sort of on the fringes of al Qaeda. His uncle, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was the operational commander of 9/11. This is an idea that's been floating around for a while.

Then we saw in the summer of 2006, a plan to blow up seven American and Canadian airliners with liquid explosives, which is the reason that you can't bring liquids on to a plane. That was an al Qaeda directed plot out of the U.K. The idea would have had those American and Canadian planes not blow up over an American city but blow up over the Atlantic, which would have been much better for the terrorists because you could do no forensics to find out what had really happened.

HOLMES: So, he'd waited, do you think, Peter? Why do you wait -- why do you think he waited, then, until he got here? Until he got to Detroit.

BERGEN: I -- you know, we don't know yet. You know, Richard Reid was assembling very similar kind of -- maybe different materials. But he also -- he waited about 3 1/2 hours into the flight. He was half way over the Atlantic.

This guy waited until the -- until the approach. Was it because that this was not really explosives but more designed to create a fire on the plane?

HOLMES: Yes.

BERGEN: We don't know.

Did he not get his act together? Did he get a case of cold feet? I mean, there are all sorts of possibilities.

HOLMES: All right. One more thing, I've got so many for you. I know we're going to be talking to you more this morning. But one more thing here: does this incident have the potential to be a game-changer the way that Richard Reid changed the game and forever changed the way we travel in this country?

BERGEN: That's a good question, T.J. I think that probably not because so many -- so many new policies are already in place. I mean, the 2006 plot was a game-changer in a sense that, you know, it really prevented you from taking liquids on to a plane. This seems to be more of the same.

You know -- it's a very good question. I think we still don't know enough about the plot to really know how it might change security.

HOLMES: All right. Peter Bergen for us, we always appreciate having you. We're going to be checking with you again plenty this morning. Thank you so much.

We got a lot, lot more questions for you this morning. We'll be asking those in a bit. But again, we are not, Brooke, as we say here, going to be too far away from this story this morning. BALDWIN: Right. He mentioned the Yemen angle. We'll be taking a deeper look at the Yemen angle. He'll also be talking to Richard Quest in Amsterdam. A couple of different angles we'll be looking at.

Stay right here. More continuing coverage here on CNN SATURDAY MORNING.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BALDWIN: Flight 253 went from Amsterdam Schiphol Airport to Detroit yesterday, carrying a 23-year-old Nigerian national on board who detonated this incendiary device, causing quite a stir in this massive investigation that we're all over this morning.

I want to go to Richard Quest, who is joining us live this morning from Amsterdam from the Schiphol Airport.

And, Richard, I just want to first begin here with the security screening process. We're talking about this Nigerian national. He originated in Lagos, Nigeria, through Amsterdam, to Detroit.

What kind of security did he or did he not go through at the airport you're standing in front of?

RICHARD QUEST, CNN INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Well, good morning to you from Amsterdam.

Over there is Pier E. You can see amongst the KLM planes, there's a couple of Delta aircrafts, as well. That is where the plane left. The Northwest plane left from yesterday.

Any passenger that would have connected to that flight or any of those U.S.-bound flights would have gone through a secondary search at the gate. Now, the authorities here at Schiphol have been quite, quite clear to me about that. All U.S. planes or flights are searched.

However, for whatever reason, the search in this case was either ineffective, it failed, or something clearly went wrong elsewhere. Today, what we do know is that the -- as a result of new U.S. administration and transportation rules, there are new procedures in place, both here at Schiphol and places like London Heathrow. In the future, all U.S.-bound passengers will be searched at the gate.

And, Brooke, that means today, for instance, in London, they're now instituting a new rule that only one piece of hand baggage can be taken on the plane. So, you can see already, from this incident, the rules are starting to change.

BALDWIN: How specifically, Richard, there in Amsterdam -- I'm sure you stuck your

head inside the airport and you saw. I don't know if the lines are forming where you are. But are they taking an increased look at perhaps liquids that people are bringing on? We don't know what kind of explosive this device might have been, whether it was liquid, whether it was powder. But what changes are you seeing already there in Amsterdam? QUEST: Well, not many at the moment. I came up here from Rome this morning, my producer came from London. She saw at the gates the screening.

What it really comes down to is looking at everybody's bags, asking at what the liquids are in people's gels and paste, taking more of an interest in what is actually being carried by the passenger. It may well transpire that what this passenger took on board was entirely acceptable at that particular point. It was the way it was handled. We just don't know.

What we do know is that from today, there is going to be this extra layer for passengers going to the United States, which will, of course, mean more security, more searches, more delays, and ultimately more inconvenience. We've seen it before, I'm afraid, we're seeing it again.

BALDWIN: We are indeed seeing it again. Richard Quest for us there in Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam -- Richard, thank you.

HOLMES: A lot -- there was a connection here, a lot of people hearing about this Nigerian now. This is a Nigerian man who's attempted of trying to blow up his plane that was landing in Detroit. Now, oftentimes, when people here at least in the U.S., talking about al Qaeda, you often hear about Pakistan, you hear about Afghanistan, but not about Africa maybe as much. But there's certainly as we know, al Qaeda has a presence there, as well.

We want to bring in Rohan Gunaratna, who is a terrorism analyst and author of "Inside al Qaeda: A Global Network of Terror."

Sir, thank you for hopping on the phone with us. Your book says "Global Network of Terror." And sometimes, maybe we don't realize just how global they are. Nigeria -- when you heard this man was from Nigeria, how did you react?

ROHAN GUNARATNA, TERRORISM ANALYST (via telephone): We have seen very significant penetration of al Qaeda and associated groups in North Africa and in the heart of Africa. There's been some activities in Nigeria, particularly in the north of Africa. So the link that we are seeing is largely inspired -- al Qaeda-inspired. (INAUDIBLE) has been in Europe for a considerable period of time.

And, of course, the tactic that he has used is consistent with other plots that have been disrupted by European and by other governments where they have targeted the aviation domain.

HOLMES: And, Rohan, something I want to pick up on that you said. You talked about

the presence may be in North Africa and you also say al Qaeda-inspired. Are we talking about a direct link between al Qaeda and these groups? Or are we talking about al Qaeda-inspired, guys who quite frankly, at it says, just inspired by al Qaeda or direct connection to that global network we're all familiar with?

GUNARATNA: It is too early to say. But most of the links that we have seen in the recent past pertaining to aviation has been al Qaeda-influenced or al Qaeda-inspired. Certainly, al Qaeda and the Islamic Maghreb has been operating and they have operated into the Sahal region just south of northern Africa and also some independent cells operating in Nigeria.

But it appears from what we have heard until now, this individual was studying in Europe. And he may have come into contact with al Qaeda cells or al Qaeda-inspired cells.

HOLMES: Would you call this a growing threat there in specifically Nigeria? And also Africa? A growing threat -- certainly any threat is one that is alarming, but one -- is this growing, I guess, at such a pace that we need to be paying more and more attention to it?

GUNARATNA: Al Qaeda in West Africa, where Nigeria is, it is a growing threat. It's a new threat, but -- and it is a threat that has concerned the Americans and the Europeans. And, certainly, this incident will make sure -- will ensure that governments will look at Africa more cautiously and more closely.

HOLMES: All right. Last thing here, Rohan, and quickly if you can. Just how tight is security at that airport? We here in the U.S. are used to going through certain things, and dealing with certain things at airports here, taking the shoes off, a lot of scrutiny of things and liquids we're taking on. But how tight would security have been -- that screening has been him going through that airport at Lagos?

GUNARATNA: In Nigeria, the security is very lax. He could have easily taken powder, gel, paste, all liquids, without, you know, being properly examined. He could have all this masqueraded and had a cover, a good cover to take this material. And I believe that authorities may have not paid the same attention that the European or an American airport would.

HOLMES: Well, Rohan Gunaratna, again, terrorism analyst, author of "Inside al Qaeda: Global Network of Terrorists" -- sir, we appreciate you hopping on the phone with us. Thank you so much.

And, Brooke, we just heard it there, both of you all kind of -- we both perked up in our chairs here.

BALDWIN: Yes.

HOLMES: But that is where we're trying to get some understanding. If he is saying to us

now, who has experience with this, the Lagos airport, you can easily get liquids -- easily get something through. Not like where you see here in the U.S., you can't get more than three ounces of a liquid through -- easily got it through there.

And now there are questions about just exactly what kind of screening, if any, he got once he got to Amsterdam. This man, quite frankly, could have packed anything he wanted on to that plane and got over the U.S. without ever going through the same kind of scrutiny the U.S. passengers are used to going through.

BALDWIN: It's frustrating to think because we know how much we go through here in the States and it's like a link in the chain. You break one link and the whole thing is broken.

HOLMES: Yes.

BALDWIN: It's tough. But we'll stay on top of the story. We'll talk more about security, especially today at the airport if you're flying. We want to hear from you. Tips to speed up, hopefully...

HOLMES: Yes.

BALDWIN: ... check in at the airport for you today. Right here.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BALDWIN: So, in the wake of the story that we are watching for you, this 23-year-old Nigerian national coming on board this flight from Amsterdam to Detroit, basically exploding partially this device. A lot of people are going to be affected at airports as security will be even further heightened.

And Josh Levs is keeping his eye on what we can do if you are heading to the airport.

JOSH LEVS, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Yes.

BALDWIN: If you have a loved one heading to the airport to just try to speed that process up just a little bit.

LEVS: Yes. And we're going to bringing you this throughout the day. You know, last hour, we're taking a look at how to speed your way through security.

Now, I'm going to talk to you how to speed your way through check-in, because if you've got to catch that flight, you know security's going to take longer now. You better know some tips that you don't spend too long with the check-in process in the first place.

We have this section that I'm grabbing from CNN.com called "Road Warriors" that specifically talks about tactics to help travelers all over the country. Let's go to some

points I have for you first.

The first one: do absolutely everything you can online. Some people think, you know, I'd really rather deal in person with a person at the airport. You can do things easily online. You can pick your seats. You can change a flight if you need to.

Do everything you can, including this next one -- check your bags online. Now, this is particularly interesting because last hour, T.J. was pointing, "You know what? They're saying check lots of stuff so you don't carry it on, but then you have to pay for the extra checked bag."

Well, if you check a bag online, there are some airlines that actually won't charge you the extra fee if you take care of doing that online. So, check your bags online. They'll print out something and it'll be easy at the airport.

Let's go to the next one here. This one talks to you about using the kiosk. Some people are really intimidated by those things. They're convinced they're going to mess up. Statistics show not that many people use it when they could. Use the kiosk when you get there.

Also, check the right confirmation code. If you have booked a flight through a third party, like Expedia or Orbitz, sometimes, what a lot of people do is they notice the wrong number on their reservation. They notice the Orbitz reservation number instead of the actual confirmation code for your flight. It's on there, look carefully, get the number right the first time. It'll speed your way through check-in.

And finally, they suggest this: put everything in one pocket or one holder so you're not fishing through different bags, different pockets, your coat pocket, your pants pocket, to find everything. Have your I.D., have your tickets, have all the basic documents in one place, even if it's a separate little holder that you're carrying with you. When people do that, you're going a lot faster through check-in.

We've posted a link at the blog, CNN.com/Josh. Also, Facebook and Twitter, JoshLevsCNN. A lot of information for you there.

So, keep it coming there, and I'll be back next hour with more information. We're staying in touch with TSA all day. We're going to keep bringing you information every hour on helping you get through the airport, guys.

BALDWIN: Great. Josh, thank you.

LEVS: Thank you.

HOLMES: Well, still to come, again, that we are all over this breaking news story -- a story that continues to develop with details. We've got the first picture of the suspect being detained on the plane. New details about investigation now happening in London.

Also, they're looking into security details at airports in Amsterdam, in Lagos, in Detroit as well where the plane was landing.

Stay with us this morning. Breaking news on CNN on the CNN SATURDAY MORNING.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HOLMES: Well, good morning again. And welcome back to the CNN SATURDAY MORNING, everybody. I'm T.J. Holmes.

BALDWIN: Good morning. I'm Brooke Baldwin, sitting in for Betty Nguyen this Saturday. Thank you for starting your day with us. Hope you've had a nice holiday weekend.

A whole lot going on, let's get started here. We want to just bring you up-to-date as to what is going on with this investigation, this attempted terror attack on a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit.

Here's briefly what we know: the suspect, this 23-year-old Nigerian national. He is, in fact, talking to the FBI, talking a lot actually. He's been questioned about possible ties with a terror group. But so far here, no affiliation has been identified.

Now, security forces say parts of this explosive device that he detonated on board, they are being examined right now. In fact, they were taken to the FBI explosives lab in Quantico, Virginia, to try to figure out what this thing was.

And another headline here, if you are traveling at all today, heading to the airports, leave some extra time. You're going to wait in longer lines, security is heightened, homeland -- Department of Homeland Security says to expect additional screening at the airport.

HOLMES: And you can only imagine what it was like at Detroit yesterday when this thing first happened. A lot of people who are on several international flights -- they, of course, were delayed in a major way because investigators were trying to figure out if this was, in fact, an isolated incident.

Let's turn to Michael Rosenfield of our affiliate WDIV in Detroit.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

MICHAEL ROSENFELD, WXYZ CORRESPONDENT: The incident happened just about 20 minutes before landing. Passengers tell me, all of a sudden, they heard a pop and a boom. There was smoke and then some flames, and absolute chaos in that section of the plane.

At that point, very brave young man in his 20s maybe his 30s jumped over all of the

chairs, all of the seats in the plane, from one side of the plane climbing all over the seats the other side of the plane in subduing the suspect in question, putting him in a head lock and then dragging him to the front of the plane.

At the same time, there was a smoke, there was this fire. Passengers were calling out for water. Flight attendants got to that section of the plane with a fire extinguisher. They were able to put the fire out.

The man, the suspect in question, was brought up to first class. Passengers in that area of the plane tell me it was pretty empty up there, so they put him in the seat, in a front row in row one. Another passenger in row one tells me the man was burned on different parts of his body that he was very quiet. He wasn't saying much and not reacting to anything that people were telling him or not reacting to any pain. Just kind of subdued and restrained in row one.

We talked to several passengers when they got off the plane. It took about five hours in between the time the plane eventually landed here in Detroit, by the time they were questioned, bags were re-screened, every single person was interviewed by federal officials here in Detroit. It took anywhere from four to five hours for all of the passengers to go through customs and be welcomed by loved ones here in Detroit or make their connecting flights.

Here's a listen to what some of them had to tell us here at the terminal.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ILIANA SCHILKE, PASSENGER: We heard a loud pop, and then a bit of a smoke, and then some flames. And yelling and screaming.

ELIAS SAWAZ, PASSENGER: There's a lady shouted, "What are you doing? What are you doing?" And then we looked back, there was some fumes and some flames.

ZEENA SAIGAL, PASSENGER: And they said, "There's fire, bring water." People bringing water and two hostesses had brought fire extinguishers and they put on the fire. And one guy, a sturdy guy, put a, you know, lock on his head and dragged him to the front. And his pants down -- I heard the pants were on the fire. I thought they pulled down because -- so that he cannot run.

RICHELLE KEEPMAN, PASSENGER: He didn't say anything. He was injured. He was burnt quite severely on his leg. They were very careful in trying to make sure that he had nothing else on him. So, it was easy to see from the exposure that he had gotten significantly burned.

He was very calm. He, you know, didn't show any reaction to pain or to any feeling of shock or nervousness. He just looked like a normal individual.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ROSENFELD: Several other international flights were also detained here at Metro Airport. These were flights coming in from London, Paris, Tokyo, and other flight from the Amsterdam. All of these passengers were seated on their planes for several hours while all of this was figured out.

And it took three, four, or five hours for all of these other passengers on these other flights to go through customs, to get out of their planes, go through customs, and get into the terminal to be welcomed here or to make their other connecting flights. But, certainly, terrifying moments from all of these people aboard Flight 253 from the Amsterdam this afternoon.

We have also learned about another incident also aboard a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit this afternoon. Another passenger was arrested on that flight, as well. Federal officials and local law enforcement here don't think the two incidents were connected. But it also did happen on a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit.

A passenger was yelling pro-Afghanistan statement, anti-American statements, as well. He was throwing food on passengers in the back part of the plane. He was taken into custody. But law enforcement officials here on the ground tell us they think it was just a drunk passenger. They did not think these two incidents were connected. (END VIDEOTAPE)

HOLMES: Well, a little scary there from our reporter from WXYZ, Rosenfield.

But everybody a little on edge and they will be for some time, especially during this holiday season.

BALDWIN: Yes, for good reason.

HOLMES: Yes.

BALDWIN: So that's the situation on the ground at Detroit.

We're also digging a little deeper as far as security in Europe goes, really just how safe are airports there? We'll get answers from a security expert.

HOLMES: Also, Yemen could be linked to this attempted attack. Apparently, this is where he got this device. At least that's what the suspect is telling authorities. We'll take you inside the terror hot spot and why he's getting so much attention from authorities here, as well.

It is 40 minutes past the hour on this CNN SATURDAY MORNING. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BALDWIN: This incident in Detroit really is highlighting security challenges at airports, not just domestically, but all around the world. The suspect that we're talking about here flew from Nigeria to Amsterdam before hopping on this flight bound for Detroit here in the U.S.

So, let's talk more about security here.

Joining me now from New York is international security analyst Glenn Schoen.

And, Glenn, I just want to start with this situation, at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, because we're hearing some conflicting reports. We want you to set the record straight for me.

This 23-year-old, he started in Lagos, Nigeria, comes through Amsterdam before heads to Detroit. What kind of -- presumably going through some kind of screening in Nigeria to then get to Amsterdam -- what kind of screening would he have gone through if anything from Amsterdam to Detroit?

GLENN SCHOEN, INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ANALYST: He would have probably gone through a full level of screening at Amsterdam. All the flights to the U.S. are especially screened. There are several airlines, including a few non-American airlines, who get additional security coverage there. And normally, that's not just the metal detector but also questions being posed to people, sort of a personal profiling concept. There's CCTV coverage of the area. There's extra security around the area, as well, in case anything is discovered there or occurs.

So, I think the person probably was screened pretty thoroughly, and that's one of the points of concern here short of being padded down and maybe physically being disrobed and looked at. This person was able to get through what's generally considered a fairly high level of aviation security within Europe. If that can happen...

BALDWIN: Yes, let's talk about that.

SCHOEN: Yes.

BALDWIN: Let's talk about that specifically, because Amsterdam -- this is a major hub. This is Charles de Gaulle in Paris. This is Amsterdam. It's major transatlantic hub, not just to take you to Europe but to the rest of the world.

How high is security there?

SCHOEN: Generally speaking, pretty high.

BALDWIN: Yes.

SCHOEN: I mean, the Dutch have invested an awful lot, not just in people, but also in technology. It's known as an innovation platform. They do a lot of work with the Department of Homeland Security on systems, on inspections, on tips, on best practices. But they're also fairly active within Europe, the European institutions, dealing with aviation security -- and IATA, the international aviation security platform headquartered in Spain.

And interesting here is that the Dutch, a few years ago, were pioneers with biometric security for passengers, the so-called fast-lane concept, just called Privium at Amsterdam airport and frequent fliers there often use it to get sort of a bit preferred treatment. But they're also much sharper or higher level of screening for these people going through.

And right now, they're also piloting the body scan technology, which may be used in the future here. There's been a big controversy around body scanning because of the privacy concerns. You can literally see through people's clothes.

BALDWIN: So, Glenn...

SCHOEN: Yes?

BALDWIN: From what I'm getting from you, we could perhaps learn a thing or two from the Dutch in what they're doing screening-wise. So, in your 25 years here of studying terrorism issues, security issues -- where do you think the lapse occurred?

SCHOEN: Well, what scares me here -- obviously, we can talk about a lapse and a failure. The problem is, we talk about a lapse and a failure when we know what we're fighting against, when we have sort of a standard of what we're looking for. And when the standard is, we're looking for powder on the one hand and maybe syringes or small glass objects on the other, it gets very difficult.

And that's what's so worrisome in this particular case. I heard one report that there might have been...

BALDWIN: It's the unknown.

SCHOEN: ... there might have been a syringe involved in making this little device.

And then the question becomes, does anybody with insulin stepping on to a flight or with flu shots getting on to a flight, are they going to be able to get through?

So, key news later today will be what did this device look like? What did it consist of? And what can the security authorities and especially the FBI tell us about what it is we need to look for now in addition to everything we were already looking for?

BALDWIN: You got it. You know, though, that the FBI looking very closely at the remains of this device there in Quantico, Virginia. And as soon as we hear what in the

world this thing was, we'll bring it to our viewers.

Glenn Schoen, international security analyst and expert, I appreciate it -- live from New York this morning.

SCHOEN: Thank you.

BALDWIN: Thank you.

Still to come, another check of your holiday forecast. I hope you had a nice one, nice relaxing.

Reynolds is here with a little preview.

Hey, Reynolds.

REYNOLDS WOLF, CNN METEOROLOGIST: Hey, Brooke.

We're looking at some potential trouble spots at few places, namely in Chicago, where we're seeing snow right now. We could have delays in places like Milwaukee, maybe even Detroit before the day is out, perhaps even Indianapolis, and back in St. Louis.

We'll give you the full rundown on your travel weather coming up on a few moments right here at CNN SATURDAY MORNING. See you in a few.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HOLMES: Well, welcome back, everybody to this CNN SATURDAY MORNING. What you are seeing is what some people are going through -- will be going through today at airports around the country. This one, though, Detroit. This is going to be a little different today. You see there a security official also -- we were told we're going to see more of these bomb-sniffing dogs.

Heightened level of security because of this attempt -- according to White House officials -- to blow up a plane that was landing in Detroit, landing at this airport.

Now, this is some of the new video from inside the airport. This is what's happening. Now, you see these every now and again when you travel just on any day. But according to security officials, homeland security, because of this new terror plot we saw yesterday, they are going to step things up just a bit which is going to cause longer lines. You see some lines there, anyway.

But also, higher scrutiny of your bags that -- you know, sometimes just comes in the form of a dog walking around with a security official and sniffing a little more. These bomb-sniffing dogs -- you're going to see some of these things like that. Some other things, they say, are different in the airport security that you won't really notice, some of them. But it

is going to be a mess.

I know Reynolds is standing by here.

Reynolds, we thought our issue this weekend was going to be this weather mess. A lot of people are worried about traveling, get through. We had a couple of strong, big weather systems. The weather system is still there. It ain't going nowhere. But now, you throw something else into the mix.

WOLF: It doesn't make it any easier, does it? I mean, and then when you add on top of the sheer volume of people that are going to be out and about, trying to get home. I mean, Christmas was yesterday. They're trying to get home. The additional luggage, too. A lot of people are bringing back presents, that kind of thing.

HOLMES: Look at that.

WOLF: So, it's going to be just a wild crush where all of these elements are coming together. Of course, the terrorism scare, then, of course, you get the rough weather. Then you have all kinds of issues, not just at the airports but also the roads. It's going to be rough times for you.

Let's show you some of the places where we're pinpointing that you might have some problems later on today in terms of expected delays. All of your airports in New York, every single one of them you're going to have problem. Same deal in Boston, we have possibly from 30 minutes to an hour due to the low clouds, the rain, the wind. All your D.C. metro airports, Philadelphia, same story. Chicago, Minneapolis, low clouds, snow and wind could cause some issues.

That may happen later on today also in places like Detroit. But the heavy snowfall as we're speaking, leaving parts of the Central Plains, moving just southwest to Chicago this time, now rolling up towards Lake Michigan. So, it could be a rough time. And the reason why we're seeing that is because of this area of low pressure that is giving you heavy snowfall.

But farther back in the Northern Plains, this had a history of creating some very windy conditions. Some gusts topping 40, 50 miles an hour winds. We're talking tropical storm force winds but they should subside later on today.

An icy mix possible in New York. Fairly nice for you across the Central Plains, but bitter, on the cool side, and rain possible for much of the west coast.

Pretty nice for you in the Rockies. Northern Rockies, may be some scattered snow showers. But certainly not of the magnitude of what we've seen up in the Northern Plains.

Some places in excess of 20 inches of snowfall and fairly dry day for you in parts of the northeast. Southeast, pretty nice.

Atlanta, Georgia, take a look at this live shot that we have for you from the top of CNN Center. It looks pretty good. You see just in the lower left-hand corner of the screen, parts of Centennial Park. The skyline looks fantastic.

High temperatures, warming up to 48 degrees in Atlanta, 63 in Tampa, 75 in Miami. But again, Miami looks nice, but no delays there. Certainly no delays expected in Atlanta. So, good times for you.

We'll have more coming up right here on CNN SATURDAY MORNING. Thanks so much for watching.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HOLMES: Well, a suspected device used in the attack, what officials are calling a terrorist attack here in the U.S., that plane that was landing from Amsterdam to Detroit yesterday, is being examined now, the device, by the FBI in Quantico, Virginia. It suspects -- the suspect here told investigators this came from Yemen.

BALDWIN: So, CNN international correspondent Mohammed Jamjoom spent a little bit of time there. He joins us now from our international desk.

Mohammed, we just want to talk about Yemen specifically. They're already facing their own security, their own terror concerns. If, in fact, this guy is telling the truth that the device did, in fact, comes from Yemen, is there anything the U.S. can do to help Yemen combat their own security problems?

MOHAMMED JAMJOOM, CNN INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Well, Brooke, I've spoken to several Yemen experts this week, and they tell me there's not a whole lot the U.S. can do that they're not doing already. I mean, in the past week, you've seen Yemen coming out making a big statement to the world, saying, "We're going after al Qaeda." There have been two air raids in the past week, killing over 60 suspected militants. The Yemenis maintained that they're doing this all on their own, but they're getting money from the U.S. and they're getting intel information from the U.S., but they're carrying out the attacks on their own.

The problem is, is that the situation is very dire in Yemen. It's not just al Qaeda, which is a resurgent there. You've got a separatist movement in the south. You've also got Houthi rebels combating the government in the north, on the border with Saudi Arabia. I've talked to people this week, they've said the situation there is so bad that it's almost as if it's a failed state right now. They really have to get it under control.

One other signs that shows how concerned the U.S. is about this, in July, you saw David Petraeus going there, meeting with the president. In August, you saw John McCain going there, meeting with the president, trying to talk about al Qaeda, how to get the situation under control. But clearly, it's not under control. There's a lot more that's going to need to

be done -- Brooke.

HOLMES: And, Mohammed, we talk about this device now that came from Yemen. How have you been able to piece together, how can we all piece together -- we talk about a guy in Nigeria who goes to Amsterdam carrying a device from Yemen -- I guess, how do we piece together the guy in Nigeria getting his hands on a device from Yemen?

JAMJOOM: Well, T.J., that's the big question right now. I mean, I've spoken to several Yemeni sources since yesterday about this. Nobody has confirmed that they know anything about this yet, that this man has obtained anything. But I will tell you that if you know anything about Yemen, it's very easy to smuggle weapons or devices outside or into Yemen.

I mean, it's very easy to do. The borders here are very porous. It's a very poor country. There are a lot of militant training camps there. And it's in complete disarray.

I mean, the government will tell you there are so many problems. If this person stopped over, if he was working with militants over there -- and we don't know this at this point -- but it's not -- it wouldn't be a surprise that he would have been able to obtain these weapons there if he really wanted to. It just would have been a lot simpler than most people expect -- T.J.

BALDWIN: So, it has porous borders, you say it's in a disarray. Give us, Mohammed, please, a brief geography lesson for people who don't know, where is Yemen, and then, what about the neighboring countries -- are they concerned? It sounds like a bad situation. Could it -- could it get even worse?

JAMJOOM: It could absolutely get worse. And that's the real concern in the region and by the U.S.

Yemen is just directly south of Saudi Arabia. Now, Saudi Arabia, as we all know, the biggest oil exporter in the world. Saudi Arabia, a big ally of the U.S.

That's one of the major concerns. The U.S. and Saudi Arabia doesn't want the violence in Yemen spilling over into Saudi Arabia. And there has been a lot of talk that that will happen. Actually, there have been a lot of indications that will happen.

I'll give you an example. Last year, Saudi al Qaeda and Yemeni al Qaeda -- they merged into one operation. It's called al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Since then, they've gotten stronger. They vowed to carry out attacks on regional neighbors.

They actually almost assassinated the Saudi Arabia anti-terrorist chief just a few months back. That really sent shockwaves through the Saudis, through the regional neighbors, and to the U.S., saying this situation is a lot worse than we think it's going to be.

And the last thing I'm going to say is, also, you have a lot -- a large influx of people

coming in from Somalia. They're coming to Yemen all the time. There's a refugee situation. You have these refugees in the north of the country because of the violence there that are trying to get into other countries.

It's a complete mess. And many people I speak to say it's only going to get worse before it gets better.

HOLMES: All right. And, Mohammed, one other thing before we let you go, possible connection -- you talked about a little earlier some of the strikes that at least Yemenis have been taking out against some of the terrorists, the militants there and there was an attack just a few days ago that reportedly killed a number of militants.

Any idea, any speculation even by some of the governments are saying that, possibly, in any way that the timing is connected between those attacks and now what we're seeing in this possible or attempted terror attack here in the U.S.?

JAMJOOM: There's a lot of -- there's a lot of talk about this. There's a lot of unsubstantiated reports about this. People are saying the timing is not coincidental. That's not been confirmed yet.

But in the past week, even the Yemenis have been coming out, the Yemeni government has been coming out saying that al Qaeda leaders have been coming out since the first attack that happened last week against them and with so many militants were killed, that they came out and vowed to take the revenge upon the U.S. and upon the Yemeni government.

Now, since then, the Yemenis said, "OK, we're going to go ahead and attack once again, we're going to go after the heart of their operation once more." There were more air strikes. Now, after that, you see this happening.

So there really are still a lot of questions and a lot of people are speculating. This could be connected and this could be some sort of retribution and that it might continue -- T.J.?

BALDWIN: CNN international (INAUDIBLE) digging a little deeper for us in this Yemen connection. Mohammed, thank you for that.

HOLMES: Yes. CNN SATURDAY MORNING is going to continue in just a minute and we are going to reset with the latest development, this whole story about an attempted terror attack on Christmas day here in the U.S. Quick break. We're right back.