

?

Statement from Jonathan Crouch, OM Area 3, CLE ARTCC, about an incident from April 17, 2011 at Cleveland ARTCC.

Around 0710, I did the Morning Briefing with the area FLMs. We covered normal operational issues, weather, and Traffic Management. I also spoke with them about managing distractions in the control room and additionally there would probably be a lot of energy around the upcoming schedule changes for controllers and management alike. I fielded several questions about staffing, which I did not have the answers to at that time.

Around 0725, I came back to the OMIC desk and began an in-depth conversation with the midnight supervisor (Duane Kinney, my Area 3 FLM schedule supervisor) about issues with our Area 3 FLM staffing for the upcoming month of May. As I recall, we spoke for 20 minutes or so and kicked around several ideas to manage this.

Around 0745-0750, as Duane was leaving for the day, he made some "oh by the way comment about, **in case you hear anything, I got a call from the DEN last night about a guy complaining about interference on the frequency in area 6. I went over to the SOC and asked them if they had any reports of frequency issues and what it might be. The said it might be "tunneling" or something.**

I went down to Area 5 to find out what it might be and ask them if they had any frequency issues. I then saw they had an electronic device, a DVD player or something. I told them to knock it off and that was the end of it. Duane said he had just done a walk through a few minutes before that and no one was using anything.

I asked, "A DVD player?" Duane said, well something, but I took care of it and told them to knock it off.

I asked him what else what else had he done. **He said he asked them "what were they thinking" and he had let the area 5 FLM (Ron Lilly) know that he had dealt with the issue. I told him this might not be the end of it.**

I planned to follow up with Ron Lilly at some point in the shift to discuss "no electronic equipment in the control room", and make sure the issue was properly dealt with and followed up on. *At that time, I knew the DEN phone was not recorded, was not aware of the conversation with the Great Lakes duty officer, nor the fact that the "audio" had gone out on the frequency.*

Around 1000-1030, I was tasked by the front office to find out who all the area schedule FLMs were and make a list of ATCS/FLM schedule sups and the schedule SMEs. I was tasked to find out what shifts they were all working this week for a possible meeting about changing schedules, make a spreadsheet, and make sure it got to the front office. *(The reason I include this is most of the energy in the control room on this day was around this issue. I knew organizing this list was important.. I was not aware of the facts and severity of the now known incident or it would have taken precedent and been top priority)*

Sometime early afternoon, I spoke with the SOC about something unrelated and also asked if there was anything about frequency issues in their Logs. One of them stated that there was not anything in the Log. The other one stated, "You mean the Blazing Saddle incident?" I told them I would check into it further.

Around 1240, I went down to Area 5 to ask Ron about his discussion with Duane Kinney and what follow up was being done. Ron informed me **that there was a lot of energy in the Area about the incident and that it had come to his attention that it might be more serious than what we were both led to believe. He thought he overheard a controller say something like "broadcast over the frequency" and "his boots being on the transmitter"**.

I asked him to put a CIC in and come to the OMIC desk. I then asked Jeff Seng to do the 1300 briefing in the M1 room.

This was about 1258 local. Ron and I listened to the voice recordings from the 0426 line and heard nothing. I figured this was because the DEN phone was not recorded. We double checked the SPECTRA voice recording for 0426 and first heard, "This is Jim the Great Lakes duty officer", and the subsequent conversation with the HAM radio operator Mi

I realized the significance of this event, but wanted to listen to the IHD (R53) frequency to be totally informed before calling Vince Shobe, the ATM.

Ron and I listened to the voice recording from the IHD sector. That is when we heard the "audio" broadcast over an open mic for 3 minutes or more and VADER22 broadcast on guard because he was not able to reach them on the frequency.\

I then called Vince (approximately 1320 local) and informend him of the events. He asked me to call Duane, get a statement, and find out the last name of Jim from the ROC.

I was unable to reach Duane before leaving at 1445, so I left questions for Rick Buentello to ask him if he called. Ron had left a message for him to call the OMIC desk. I spoke with Duane around 1515. He seemed shocked by the frequency issue and said something to the fact, **oh, I thought it might have been on in the background during a single transmission.** I asked him if he had listened to the voice recordings and he said, **no, I did not.** I told him he needed to call the OMIC desk to make a statement.

The before statements are my recollection of the days events to the best of my ability. I reserve the right to amend this statement, should anything else come to my mind to shed greater clarity on the events.

Signature

date