

INITIAL SYNOPSIS OF MOVIE BROADCAST PROVIDED TO ZOB
MANAGEMENT BY ZOB QUALITY ASSURANCE

Monday April 18, 2011

At approximately 2:00 a.m. local on Sunday April 17, 2011 ZOB received a call from Michael E. Sakmar a ham radio operator in Johnstown, PA. The call was forward to ZOB from the Eastern Service Area through the Great Lakes ROC.

Mr. Sakmar reports that he was monitoring frequencies in the vicinity of Johnstown, PA and heard what appeared to be the audio from a movie being broadcast on ATC frequencies. Mr. Sakmar reported this to the local emergency services 911 number. It is unknown how he came to contact the Eastern Service Area but his call was eventually forwarded to the OMIC desk at ZOB.

Mr. Sakmar then described to the ZOB OMIC the equipment he was using to monitor frequencies and that he was able to determine that audio from a movie was being simulcast on four ZOB ATC frequencies: 121.2/299.2 and 124.4/327.1.

121.2/299.2 and 124.4/327.1 are low altitude frequencies used in Area 5 at ZOB. At the time of the incident two more frequency pairs were being simulcast with the frequencies in question, 126.725/291.65 and 126.95/239.3. The RCAG site for these additional frequencies are located a considerable distance from Mr. Sakmar's location and would have been out of reception range. The frequencies that Mr. Sakmar did monitor are located at a RCAG in Blue Knob, PA approximately 15 miles from Mr. Sakmar's site. ZOB did not receive complaints of unauthorized broadcasts on 126.725/291.65 and 126.95/239.3, nor were there any aircraft being worked by ZOB on these frequencies.

Mr. Sakmar related that in each instance, all four frequencies broadcast the same movie audio and that the broadcasts on all frequencies were at a normal signal strength that would be associated with ATC output at the Blue Knob, RCAG.

The transmission of movie audio first occurred at 0530:40 to 0530:45. The second transmission of movie audio occurred from 0533:43 to 0536:49. Near the end of the second transmission, the lone aircraft that the IHD radar controller was working, VADER 22 attempted to contact ZOB. When unsuccessful, VADER 22 broadcast on 243.0 and was heard by both ZOB and ZDC. After the call on 243.0, the movie audio ended and the ZOB IHD radar controller responded to VADER 22.

IHD radar frequencies were monitored until 5:30 a.m. local and no further unauthorized transmissions occurred.

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