



## Rebuttal to the Hypothesis that a Boeing 737 Struck the Pentagon

By David Chandler

*Editor's Note: This paper is a response to the June 2024 paper by Mehmet Inan, which can be read [here](#). This paper was republished with minor revisions related to the missing rung of the camera pole near Highway 27 on January 30, 2025. The original version, published on January 23, 2025, can be found [here](#).*

Agreeing with [Mehmet Inan](#) that what struck the Pentagon was a plane, one clear way to distinguish its dimensions is to examine the objects it impacted as it transited from the Hwy 27 overpass to the Pentagon.

- Five light poles were knocked down (Figures 4 and 8<sup>1</sup>). Three of these poles are especially significant in our immediate inquiry.
  - The vertical shafts of the first and third poles were solidly hit by the right wing and were severed.
  - The vertical shaft of the second light pole was lightly grazed by the left wingtip. The shaft was bent about 90° and knocked over, but did not break. This contact provides a precise data point for the plane's left wingtip.
- The right engine of the incoming plane cut out a circular arc at the top of a tree on the overpass, as with a dull blade, leaving frayed ends. (Figures 1 and 2<sup>2</sup>)



*Figure 1 Circular notch in top of tree in relation to the camera pole with a scar and missing rung. This image, and the following detail views, were cropped from a photograph taken by Staff Sgt Gary Coppage on 9/11/2001. Note that this photograph was taken after the roof of the Pentagon had collapsed, approximately a half hour after impact.*



Figure 2 Detail view of tree notch, showing the frayed ends of the stems.

- A Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) highway camera pole, close to the notched tree and first light pole, has a surface scar and is missing a rung (Figures 1 and 3). There are no “before” pictures of the camera pole for comparison, but the positioning and the nature of the damage are consistent with its being grazed by the right wingtip. The lateral spacing between the camera pole and second light pole is about 125 ft.
  - As a side note, we have found an image of unknown origin that is identical with the Coppage photograph, except that it shows the rung as not missing. *This is not a different photograph.* It is an altered copy of the Coppage photograph. Besides the fact that this image conflicts with the documented original, other photographs, from earlier in the day confirm the rung is actually missing.<sup>3</sup> See Figure 4 for one notable example.



Figure 3 Detail view of scar and missing rung on the VDOT traffic camera pole cropped from the Coppage photo in Figure 1.



Figure 4 Confirming view from a different angle showing the rung to be missing, cropped from a Jason Ingersoll photograph taken earlier in the day before the Pentagon roof collapsed.

- One other piece of physical evidence of impact was the leading wing slat from the right wing of the incoming plane, Figure 6, that was dislodged and dropped onto the lawn prior to the plane hitting the Pentagon wall. For this piece to be dislodged from the wing, the impacts from light poles 1 and/or 3 would have to make solid contact with this part of the wing. This debris fragment is discussed in the video, *Chapter 12: Explanation of the Evidence at the Pentagon on 9/11* which can be found at <https://911speakout.org/wayne-coste/>.

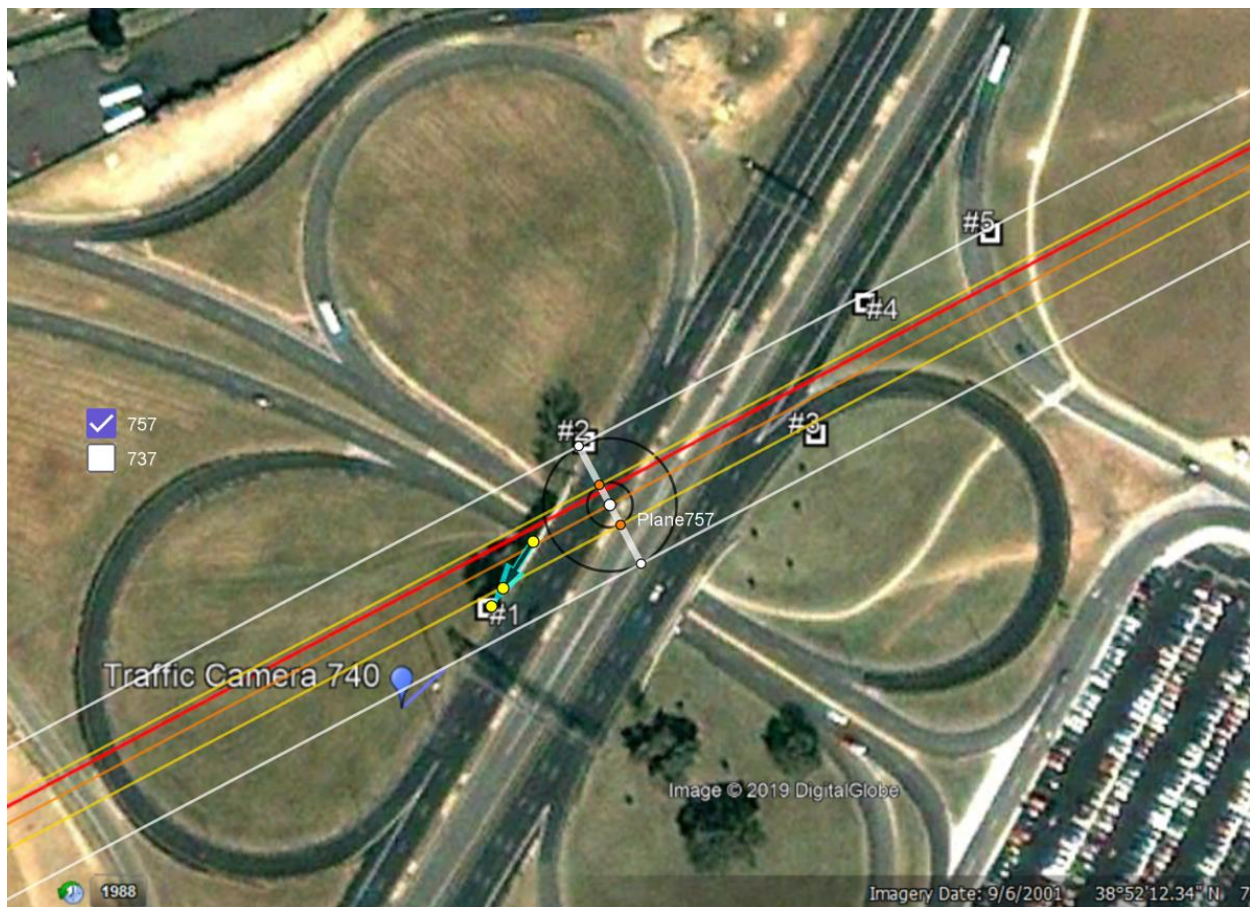


Figure 5 Tracks of the nose, the wing tips, and the engines of a 757. The near vertical linear shadow near the blue bubble near the bottom left corner of the image is the shadow of the traffic camera pole. The bottom of the shadow marks the location of the pole.

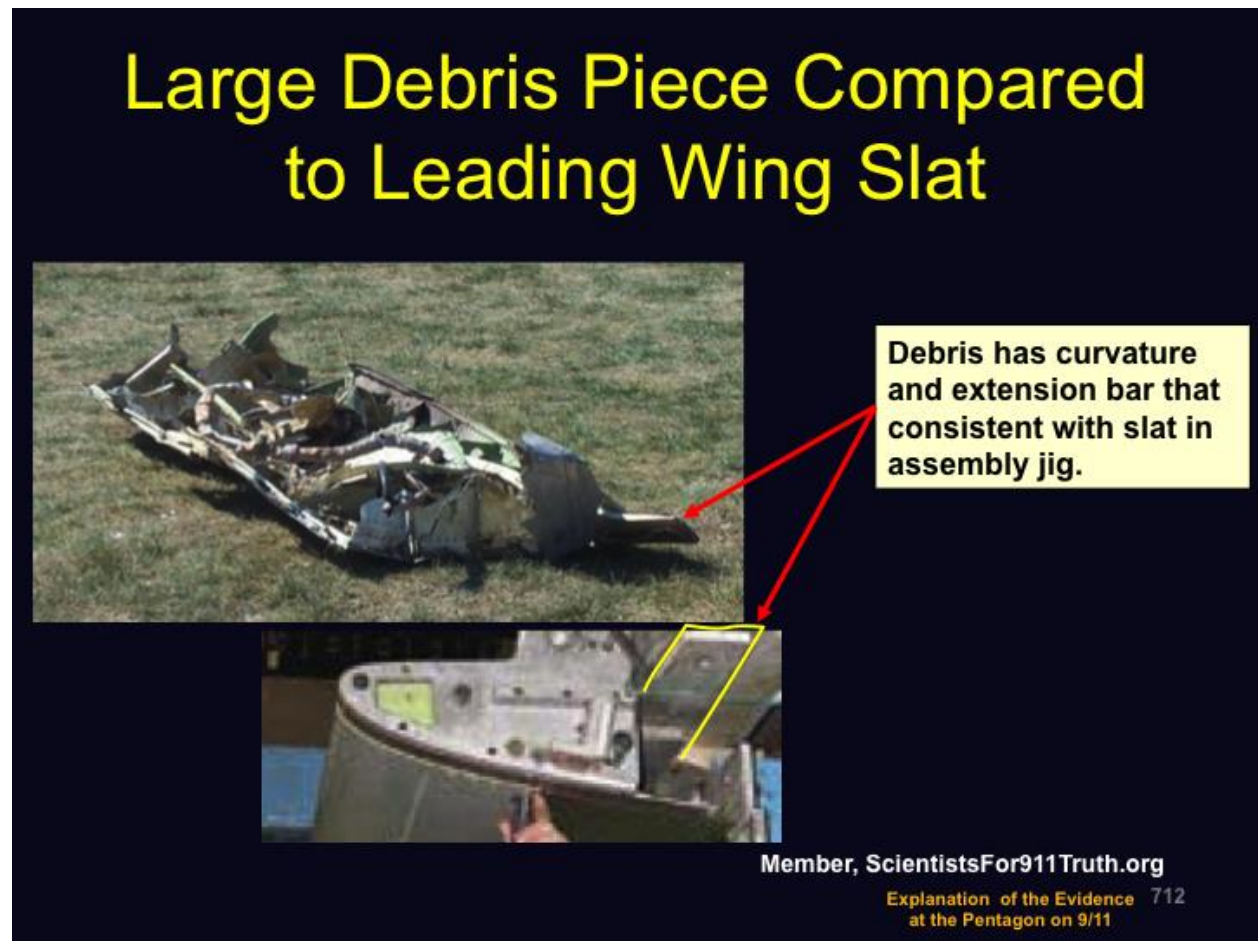


Figure 6 Leading wing slat impacted by first and third light poles and dropped onto the lawn prior to the plane reaching the Pentagon wall.

### Boeing 757 Hypothesis

Figure 5 shows the flight path of the Pentagon plane using the wingspan and “engine span” of a 757 and the direction of motion (red line) given by the flight data recorder (FDR) whose data module was recovered in the Pentagon debris. The 757 wingspan is 124 ft 10 in, as documented in Figure 7.<sup>4</sup>

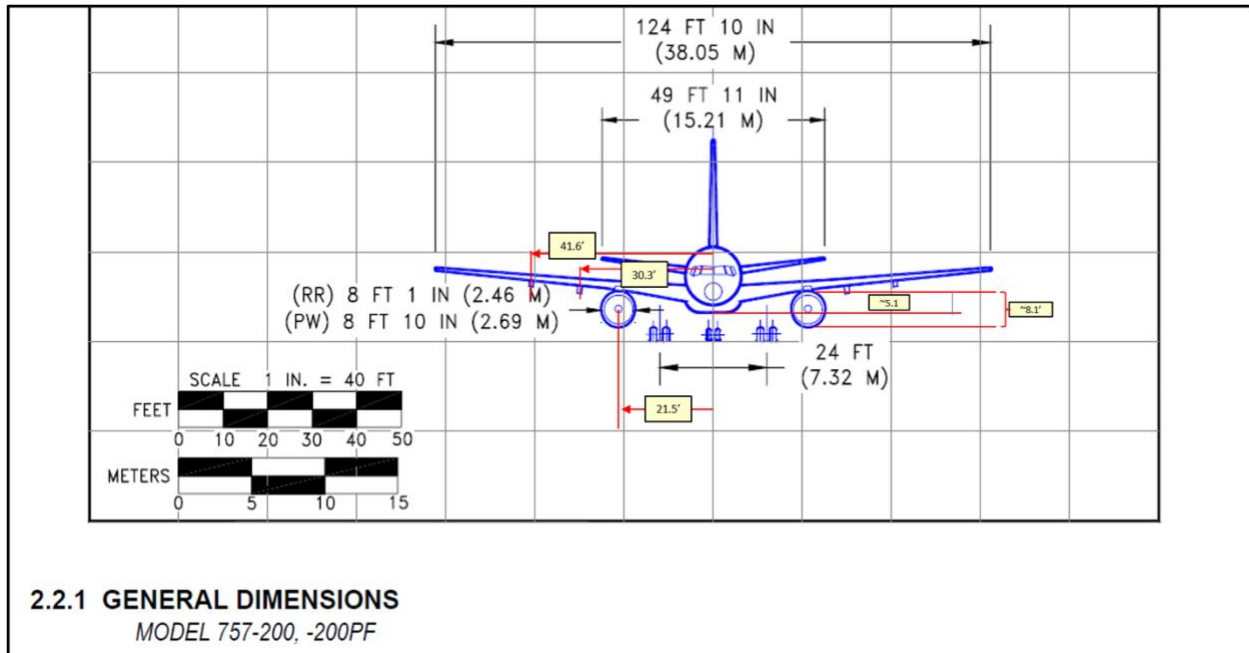


Figure 7 Wingspan and "engine span" of a 757.

Positioning the left wingtip at light pole 2, the right engine passes directly through the notch in the tree indicated by a yellow dot at the tip of the black arrow near the first light pole in Figure 5<sup>5</sup> and the right wingtip touches the VDOT camera pole. It is hard to imagine that this spacing is coincidental, given the other corroborating evidence. Furthermore, with this wingspan and this positioning, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> light poles impact the leading right wing slat just outside the right engine. Such a double impact on the wing slat can account for its damage causing it to dislodge and drop onto the lawn.

The alignment of all of these points of contact is consistent with the hypothesis that the Pentagon plane was a Boeing 757.

### Boeing 737 Hypothesis

To evaluate the Boeing 737 hypothesis, I have produced a second construction (Figure 9), with the wing span and "engine span" of a 737-400 (94.75 ft and 31.6 ft respectively), as documented in Figure 8.<sup>6</sup> Note, in Figure 9, that if the left wingtip touches the 2<sup>nd</sup> light pole, the right wingtip *misses* the VDOT camera pole by a wide margin, and the right engine not only misses the notch in the tree but appears to miss the tree entirely. Furthermore, although it is possible to find a path for the wings to touch all five light poles, all of them would be grazing contacts with the wingtips. Such contacts cannot account for the fact that the vertical shafts of poles 1 and 3 were severed, and none of the impacts with the poles would have contacted or dislodged the leading wing slat of the right wing that was found on the lawn.

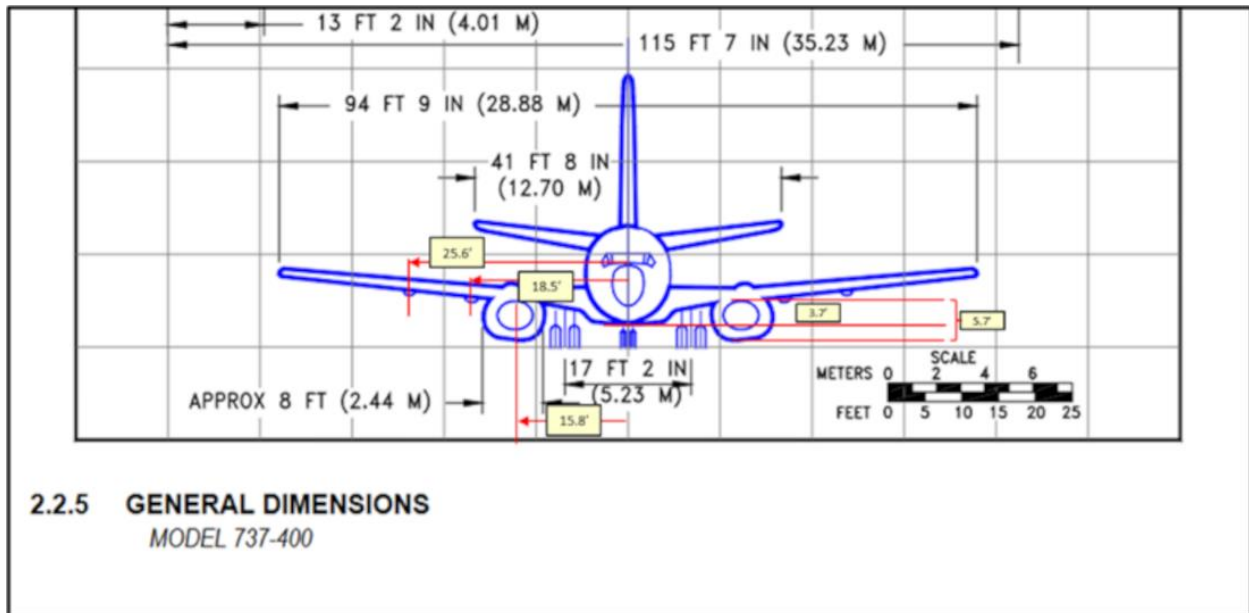


Figure 8 Dimensions of a 737. Note in particular the wingspan and the distance of the engines from the centerline.

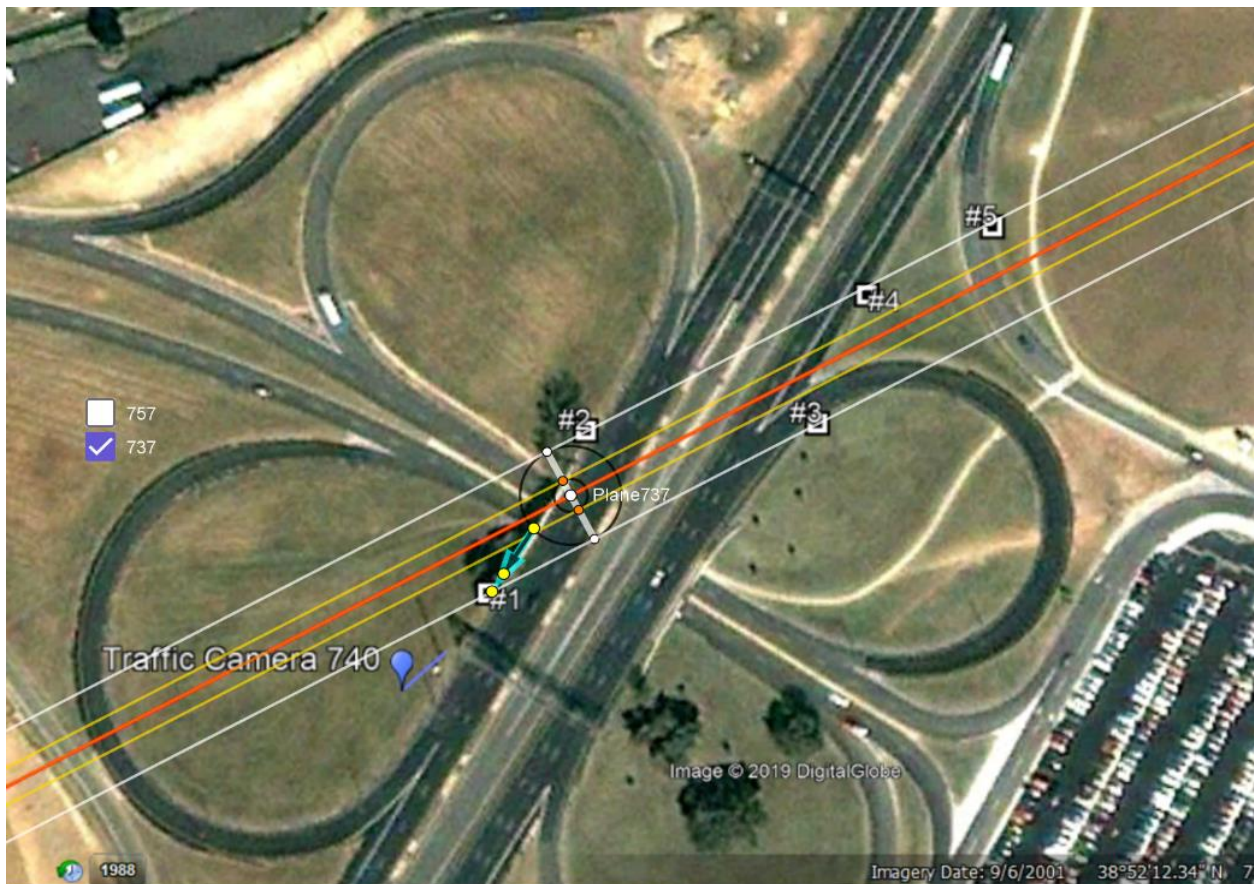


Figure 9 A second set of trails has been constructed to match the dimensions of a 737-400. The assembly has been positioned so the left wingtip touches the second light pole, which is an absolute requirement for any hypothetical plane flying along this path.



## Conclusion

The Boeing 737 hypothesis fails to account for the observations, whereas the Boeing 757 hypothesis accounts for all of these observations.

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## References and Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Source: Background image from Google Earth. Geometric construction using GeoGebra.

<sup>2</sup> Source of original photograph: U.S. Air Force file photo by Staff Sgt Gary Coppage, <https://www.33fw.af.mil/News/Photos/igphoto/2000030817/mediaid/1336168>.

<sup>3</sup> The image, from an undocumented source, identical with the Coppage photo except for showing the rung intact, is archived for comparison at: <https://ic911.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/coppage-photo-with-rung.jpg>. The original Jason Ingersoll image, from which the detail view in Figure 4 was cropped, is available at [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d2/The\\_pentagon\\_in\\_flames\\_moments\\_after\\_a\\_hijacked\\_jetliner\\_crashed\\_into\\_building\\_at\\_approximately\\_0930\\_010911-M-CI426-015.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d2/The_pentagon_in_flames_moments_after_a_hijacked_jetliner_crashed_into_building_at_approximately_0930_010911-M-CI426-015.jpg). As a point of interest, note that the rung was never repaired. The eighth rung from the bottom on the north side of the pole is still missing on current Google Street View [photos](#).

<sup>4</sup> Boeing Corporation, 757-200/300 Airplane Characteristics for Airport Planning, p. 13, August 2002, <https://www.boeing.com/content/dam/boeing/boeingdotcom/commercial/airports/acaps/757.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The graphical construction to locate the notch in the tree in this overhead view is discussed in the paper “Pentagon Approach Path of a Boeing 757 on 9/11/2001” by David Chandler, currently being reviewed for publication in the *Debated Topics Forum*.

<sup>6</sup> Boeing Corporation, 737 Airplane Characteristics for Airport Planning, p. 32, September 2013, <https://www.boeing.com/content/dam/boeing/boeingdotcom/commercial/airports/acaps/737.pdf>