MS NOW's *Deadline: White House*
11/16/26
4:36:29 p.m.
7 minutes and 34 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Trump Admin. Deflects on FAA Outrage Responsibility]

NICOLLE WALLCE: The FAA's four-hour fiasco on Friday, the most substantial nationwide ground stop since 9/11, ignited a series of cascading traumas for travelers, some still stranded trying to get home, adding to a pileup of embarrassments for Donald Trump and his administration. Apparently, and according to what Trump's cabinet officials have told us, it was a routine router upgrade at a radio facility in Arkansas that set off a chain reaction inside the agency's outdated communications network. Again, that is, if we're still trusting the word of Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, whose only emotional note since the confusing and anxiety inducing ground stop has been anger. Not for nothing, *The Times* reports this: "agency officials also noticed a second, unspecified issue at a radar facility in Amarillo, Texas, that had been upgraded weeks before," which is bad enough without the embarrassment associated with the podium performance of Duffy and fellow keystone cop Markwayne Mullin. He's the secretary of Homeland Security. They lacked in adequate answers and apparent competence on Friday, and any shred of empathy for what the American people were enduring. But they were bursting with things to say in terms of who to blame. For Duffy, it was a long list. It was communicated angrily. It included Congress. And what he suggested was underfunding. The former *Road Rules* contestant wanted $50 billion for upgrades, even though Republicans have controlled all branches of government and have found it in them to fund all sorts of silly things for Donald Trump, but not air traffic control. Trump, you might be surprised to learn that, today he insisted the ground stop was Joe Biden's fault. But just watch. It does get worse.

YAMICHE ALCINDOR: Mr. President, what do you say to critics who say you were too focused on D.C. construction projects while our airline systems were crumbling, given the fact that Republicans have been in control?

TRUMP: Well, if you take a look at the White House, it's flawless. But if you listen to me, I know you don't see dirt. But if you take a look at the White House, you never noticed broken windows, obviously, from where you come, I don't know. But we had 18 broken windows. The plaster, the exterior plaster was falling off the wall. [SCREEN WIPE] Take a look at the helipad. I hope you like it because it's gotten reviews.

ALCINDOR: [INAUDIBLE]

TRUMP: Listen to me. The helipad has gotten great reviews, and the nicest of all will be the ballroom, which is now. People are saying it fits like a glove. It's going to be able to — we have something that for 150 years, people have wanted it. But why would you say I spent time. I spent very little time at the White House. I live here, and I see that this stone. Look. See this stone? Get your cameras on it. This stone was badly broken.

ALCINDOR: [INAUDIBLE]:

TRUMP: I have a response —

ALCINDOR: [INAUDIBLE] more money to this, given the fact that —

TRUMP: — oh, you're so pathetic.

ALCINDOR: — you were —

TRUMP: Listen. I have a responsibility to make sure the symbol of our country is in decent shape. And it takes me ten minutes a day. Very little time.

WALLACE: It's been reported by Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan in *Regime Change* that he spends the vast majority of his time, not ten minutes working on home renovations. I'm surprised he didn't tell Yamiche to come inside and look at his new curtains. We did cut him off after he spoke so rudely and offensively to our friend Yamiche Alcindor, and we'll spare you the rest of that three-minute babbling diatribe about all the things he'd paved and bulldozed. But before he walked off, he was trailed by Natalie Harp and Stephen Miller, importantly. There they go. All of it, though confining to illustrate precisely what the voters rejected in historic numbers not even two weeks ago. I want to bring in New York Times White House reporter Luke Broadwater. Also joining us, the author of the substack newsletter, To the Contrary, Charlie Sykes. Luke, what do we know about what happened on Friday?

LUKE BROADWATER: Well, we know that Donald Trump was essentially MIA as the crisis was unfolding. He was concerning himself with Hollywood tax credits and, you know, a grudge with Gavin Newsom as Sean Duffy and Markwayne Mullin were out there talking to the press. We know that those two secretaries weren't exactly on the same page, that even officials within Duffy's organization were alarmed at some of the things Markwayne Mullin was saying, which they said weren't true. You know, Mullin initially said that the outage was due to new technology that had just been installed when that — that wasn't the case. So they, by their own admission, don't know exactly what caused this nationwide outage. They're calling for a huge influx of money. It's much more money than the White House has asked for ever before. For the FAA, it's actually, I think, four or five times more than they've asked for in the past. But they you know, as you rightly pointed out, they currently have for a few more months, both chambers of congress. And if someone is not delivering the money that Donald Trump says he needs, that is the Republican Congress. It's not — it's not Democrats in control currently. So, you know, to the extent that he can, if he — if the President really cared about this, he could get that funding bill across before the new year, I'm sure of it.

WALLACE: Well, I mean, Luke, that's the asking for more money part of the equation. Here's what everything they've done to slash money and expertise and infrastructure. DOGE was asked to make, "rapid safety upgrades." It included laying off 400 FAA employees as part of 2025 DOGE downsizing, OMB delayed $5 billion in funds that had already been approved to 2028, and Democrats are saying that $1 billion of the 12.5 billion in DOT funds has been sent. So,

there's $11 billion they haven't spent that have already been appropriated. There's $5 billion that they've hung on to — to do something else. I don't know, maybe it's going into the Arch, and they're the ones that fired 400 FAA employees and tasked DOGE with slashing jobs. I mean, it's not just that they hadn't asked for the funding, when they controlled all the government. They did the damage.

BROADWATER: Yeah. And Democrats rightly point out that $12 billion was — was sent to them for this very purpose. And they've spent only a small fraction of it already. And now they're asking for more money. But you're right, you don't — you don't do — generally in life, you don't do more with less. You do less with less. And so, if you cut key parts of government, you lay people off — sometimes, the way DOGE was doing it, sort of at random or by serial number, not based on expertise or who actually needed to, whether the person was performing the job. You get weakened agencies and when you get weakened agencies, you can — you can get crises like these.

WALLACE: Crises that they, "I can't apologize for." That's what we heard from Mr. Duffy. I'll give that one to you, Charlie, on the other side of a short break.

(....)

4:48:11 p.m.
4 minutes and 33 seconds

COLIN JOST [on NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, 11/14/26]: The scary thing, by far, about all these flights getting grounded was the messaging from the normally dependable Trump administration. [LAUGHTER] First, they said it was a telecommunications outage as of now — [LAUGHTER] — which, why add as of now? [LAUGHTER] No one wants to hear your child is safe, as of now. [LAUGHTER] Then, Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy said the whole situation was the result of a contractor upgrading copper wire to fiber optic cable. So, one guy switched out one wire — [LAUGHTER] — and took out all planes? [LAUGHTER] I think that's literally a scene from the movie Airplane. [LAUGHTER]

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Trump Admin. Deflects on FAA Outrage Responsibility]

WALLACE: We're back with Luke and Charlie. So, Charlie, they've lost culture. There's an article about how they've lost the manosphere. They've lost the center. They lost the midterms, and they seem to have lost their any semblance of still talking to their own base of support, however dwindling, with any sort of sympathy or empathy, I mean, to date, no one has apologized. They keep saying, I don't know anyone an apology. You know, this is what we inherited.

SYKES: Yeah, the — there doesn't appear to be a pivot toward credibility or toward competence. I mean, the least surprising thing about all of this is that Sean Duffy and Mark Wayne Miller — Mark Mark Wayne Mullin, would faceplant. [WALLACE LAUGHS] I mean, I

remember the first time that I actually met Sean Duffy. You know, I'm a fellow Wisconsinite, and I remember Paul Ryan was pushing him before he became a congressman, and he came on my radio show. I remember telling Ryan afterwards that that guy was embarrassing. That guy is definitely not ready for prime time. [WALLACE LAUGHS] And after all these — these years, he still isn't.

WALLACE: Yeah.

SYKES: So, this is going to get worse because, of course, Donald Trump, you know, prioritizes slavish loyalty over competence. And obviously, this is an administration in which no one's ever going to say, "yes, I take responsibility for all of this." So, in many ways, as the Nvidia scandal that you were talking about, is the quintessential Trump era scandal, this is the quintessential Trump-era fubar. And once again, there's no indication that Donald Trump is going to fess up, that Donald Trump is going to make the kinds of changes to bring in the expertise, because as you pointed out, one of the things that Elon Musk and DOGE did was to strip much of that expertise from — from government. And the idea that they want $50 billion more, look, I think that you know Donald Trump thinks that of the American public is very good with numbers, but I think that people can look at this and go, so you had enough money for the war in Iran, you have enough money for the ballroom, for the helipad. You had enough money for surging all of those masked ICE thugs into American city streets, but you don't have enough money to keep the planes flying in this country. So. I think that this was — this was, again, a perfect illustration of what happens when you don't take credibility seriously, when you don't take competence seriously. And I don't know what the facts of the situation is. Luke understands it much better than I do, but. We're at a point now where the public, just in Congress, will not give these guys the benefit of the doubt when they say this is what happened.

WALLACE: What's interesting to me, though, Charlie, watching him behave so petulantly amid a line of questioning, perfectly legitimate from Yamiche Alcindor, is that he seems to think that air travel doesn't impact him, like private planes have their own air traffic control. Like, I don't think that's how it works. Like, either the skies are safe for everyone, or if jets are flying without, you know, either everyone is safe or no one is safe. I mean, this detachment from any element of American life that isn't sort of bubble wrap for him is disturbing.

SYKES: Well, and also, wasn't that one of the themes of the midterm campaign? That's exactly why it turned out in many ways, the way that it did that is that he's wrapped himself in this bubble, and he seems so completely tone deaf, and I'm glad — I'm glad that you actually ran that little segment, because it really does show you where Donald Trump's head is at, and it's not keeping the American people safe. It's not keeping the trains or the planes running on time.

WALLACE: It's, like, really proud of this, like, a round hunk of concrete on which his helicopter lands, which isn't I don't know much about building, but it doesn't really seem like a feat of architecture.