THE DATA-BACKED TRUTH BEHIND
AIRLINE SAFETY
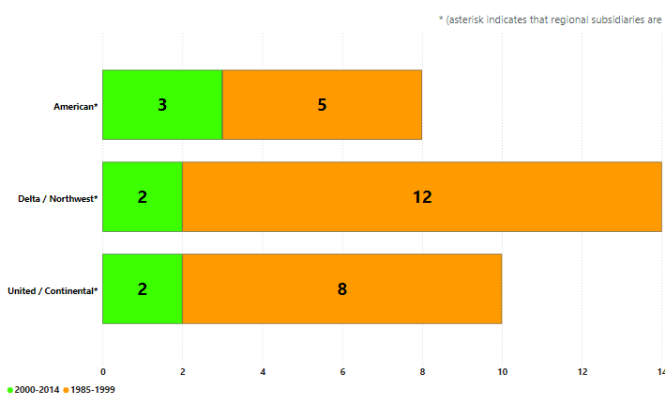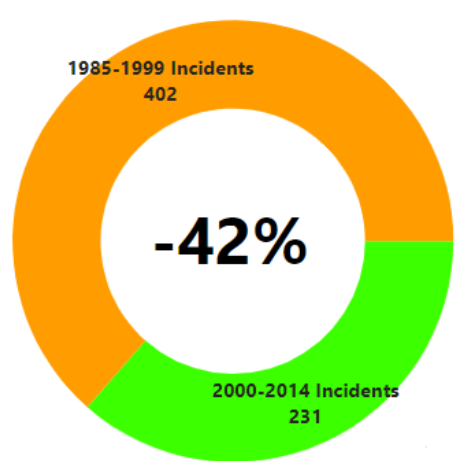
What the media reports on airline safety isn't the full story.
Here's what the data says.

INCIDENTS

The number of airline incidents in 2000–2014 declined over 42% from 1985–1999.

1985-1999 Incidents
402

-42%

2000-2014 Incidents
231

AIRLINE PROGRESS

(asterisk indicates that regional subsidiaries are included)

	2000-2014	1985-1999
American*	3	5
Delta / Northwest*	2	12
United / Continental*	2	8

The top 3 airlines by weekly distance traveled (United, Delta, and American) decreased their number of fatal accidents by an average of 66% from 1985–1999 to 2000–2014.
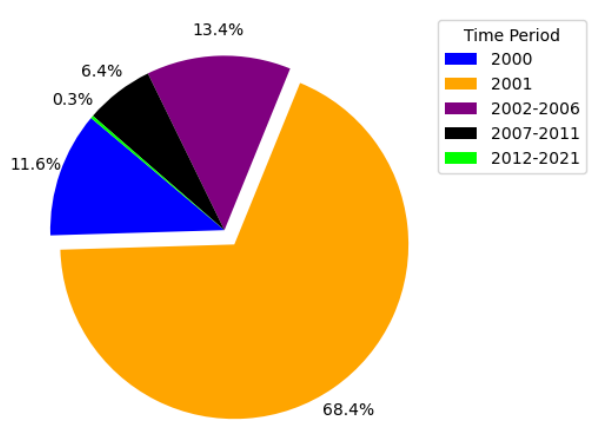
FATAL ACCIDENTS
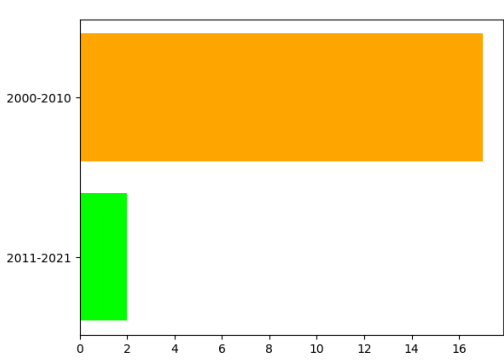
2000-2010	
2011-2021	

Fatal airline accidents dropped almost 90% from 2000–2010 to 2011–2021.

FATALITIES

The number of airline fatalities in 2000–2014 declined over 50% from 1985–1999.
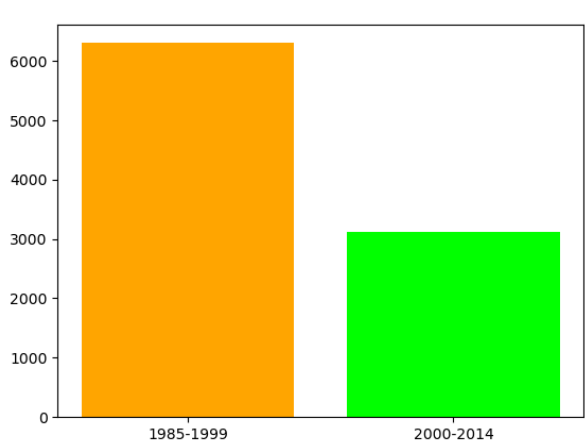
(bar chart: 1985-1999 ≈ 6400, 2000-2014 ≈ 3100)

9/11 MISCONCEPTION

The year 2001, in which contained the terrorist attack in New York on September 11th, accounts for more than 68% of all onboard airline casualties from the start of the 21st century to 2021.
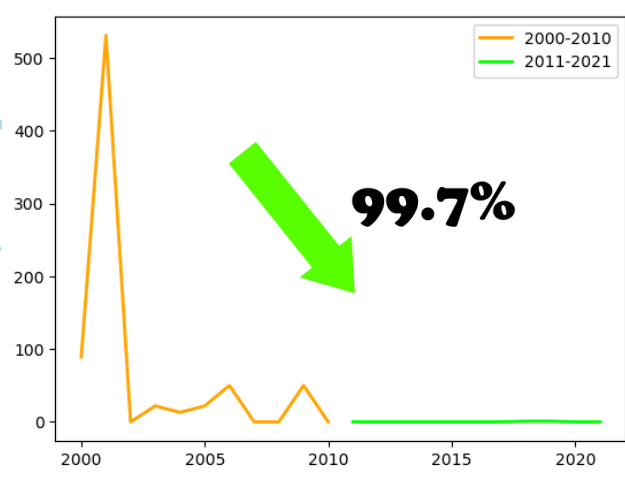
The total number of airline fatalities from 2000–2010 has been stunted by 99.7% when looking at the same metric for 2011–2021.

Time Period
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002-2006
- 2007-2011
- 2012-2021

13.4%
6.4%
0.3%
11.6%
68.4%

2000-2010
2011-2021
99.7%

References

1. Silver, N. (2014, July 18). Should Travelers Avoid Flying Airlines That Have Had Crashes in the Past? FiveThirtyEight. Retrieved June 15, 2024, from https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/should-travelers-avoid-flying-airlines-that-have-had-crashes-in-the-past/
2. Airlines for America (2022, December 24). Safety Record of U.S. Air Carriers. Data & Statistics. Retrieved June 15, 2024, from https://www.airlines.org/dataset/safety-record-of-u-s-air-carriers/
3. Boice, J. (2022, December 16). Airline-safety.Csv. Fivethirtyeight. Retrieved June 15, 2024, from https://github.com/fivethirtyeight/data/blob/master/airline-safety/airline-safety.csv