

William Rodriguez, Escape Artist

To a hero of 9/11, the truth is a straitjacket.

By Mark Roberts email: [nyctours\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:nyctours(at)gmail.com) May, 2007

Comment by William Rodriguez is invited and will be published here if he wishes.
Bolding and highlighting of text indicates my emphasis, unless otherwise noted.

William Rodriguez was a janitor in the World Trade Center's north tower. He risked his life on 9/11 to help people who could not help themselves. He nearly became one of the many 9/11 victims whose last moments we know little of. At 10:28 that morning, Rodriguez had just left the building to secure an ambulance for Ed Beyea, a quadriplegic whom he had helped carry from the 27th floor to the lobby. He was only about 100 feet from the north tower when it collapsed. He dove for cover beneath a fire truck as thousands of tons of steel and concrete rained down around him. He credits his training as a stage magician and escape artist with helping him endure the choking dust and confinement that followed. He was pulled from the rubble about two hours later, with only minor injuries. He stayed at the scene to search for survivors. Rodriguez had worked at the Trade Center for over 19 years. Dozens of his friends were murdered on that hellish day.

I'm glad that William Rodriguez is around to tell [his story](#), which he does passionately and articulately. When I met him at Ground Zero in September, 2006, I was honored to shake his hand and thank him for his selfless concern for others that day. He was very sincere and personable.



Me (left) and William Rodriguez

Rodriguez has been lauded by the White House several times. He received a National Hero award from the Senate of Puerto Rico, his homeland. As president of the Hispanic Victims Group, a director of the 9/11 United Services Group, and a member of the Family Advisory Council of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, he has worked for 9/11 victims' rights and financial aid. As for his

own financial support, he says he never applied for the Federal Victims Compensation, for which he almost certainly was eligible. Along with the families of victims, he successfully pushed for the formation of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, better known as the [9-11 Commission](#).

Rodriguez believes he heard an explosion in the basement of the north tower an instant *before* American Airlines flight 11 slammed into its upper floors. However, since he was in the windowless B1 sublevel at the time, he had no way of knowing when the plane actually hit the building. He ignores rational explanations for the explosion in the basement, which will be examined in depth here. He also says that he heard suspicious noises and small explosions while helping with the evacuation. Again, there are rational explanations for these events. He thinks his story hasn't been given the attention it deserves. He feels rebuffed by the 9/11 Commission, by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST, which investigated the cause of the collapses), and by the press.

I join Rodriguez in dislike of the G.W. Bush administration. Like him, in 2002 and early 2003 I protested against what I thought (and think) was a reckless drive to invade Iraq, and I was very angry when Bush was reelected in 2004. But Rodriguez has taken his dislike of Bush & co. to a remarkable level. Since 2004 he has used his status as a hero to travel widely and spread the conspiracy theory that the U.S. government orchestrated the 9/11 attacks and murdered his friends.

Like other 9/11 conspiracists Rodriguez has no evidence to support, nor will he take the time to research, his own claims. The keystone—nearly the only stone—of his argument is that the explosion he heard in the basement could not have been caused by jet fuel in the elevator shafts.

Rodriguez addressed this issue in August, 2006:

"(911myths.com) says 'A jet fuel fireball erupted upon impact and shot down at least one bank of elevators.' ...Very strange indeed, since there were only one elevator shaft (the 50A car) that went all the way to B6, the operator was inside, Mr. Griffith and he survived with a broken ankles. He should have died burnt since on this theory the ball of fire went down. He is alive and well and *I will interview him in the future to clear the disinformation.*" [Source](#)

Rodriguez, in December, 2006:

"Last, funny everybody brings the position that the ball of fire went down the center elevator shaft and exploded in the basement, since the actual elevator operator of the 50A car is alive and after braking

both ankles did not get burned by any of this. He should have been burned alive. He was never called to testify." [Source](#)

As do most 9/11 conspiracists, Rodriguez first forms a conclusion and then hopes that the facts will support him. They don't. He should have investigated this "disinformation" before he began touring internationally to accuse his government and military of the mass murder of nearly 3,000 Americans.

Elevator operator Arturo Griffith was in freight car 50A with carpenter Marlene Cruz: "The whole car shook and juddered as he heard an ominous noise *from above*." [Source](#)

"'I felt the explosion and the elevator dropped,' Arturo said at St. Vincents Hospital in Manhattan, where he's being treated for a broken leg." [Source](#)

"Arturo Griffith was in a freight elevator when the building was attacked. The elevator dropped to B1 (the basement level), fell below the landing. He was trapped in the elevator beneath debris and unconscious. He remembers seeing a beam of light. He called out. *The smoke was so thick; Arturo could not see his own hand. So his rescuers had to follow his voice to find him.* 'I don't know who saved me. It was so black and smoky. I couldn't see nothin',' Arturo said. 'When they got me out, I told them there was someone else down there, a woman. They went back to get her. **Seconds after they pulled her out, a ball of fire came down the shaft. They almost got killed.**' " [Source](#)



Carmen and Arturo Griffith. She was burned while operating an elevator on the north tower's 78th floor.

Mr. Rodriguez, is it really easier to tour the world, claiming that the official version of 9/11 is a lie, than to do a bit of internet searching or to make some phone calls?

In this paper I will present over 220 witness accounts from inside the towers, from below the aircraft impact zones. Below the 92nd floor of the north tower, one or more

of the following conditions was reported on at least 50 separate floors, all the way to the lowest basement level: fireballs from the elevator shafts, fires, presence of jet fuel or fumes, blown elevator shafts or elevator cars, burns or other injuries from elevator shaft explosions and fire, and interior damage caused by the aircraft impact, fuel ignition, and falling elevators. More than one of those conditions was reported on many of those 50 floors. What William Rodriguez and other conspiracists say couldn't happen, did happen: to real people in the real world.

Rodriguez's main complaint is that his account has been ignored by official investigative bodies. Yet when he had the chance to go on the public record at a 2004 meeting held by chief investigators from NIST, he spoke about problems with keeping the stairwells clean, about some preexisting damage in the stairwells, and about the elevators not working properly after the attack. **At a public meeting, to the people charged with finding out why the towers collapsed, Rodriguez said nothing about his major claim: that he knows there were explosives in the north tower basement.**

However, Rodriguez did say this to NIST:

"The fire, the ball of fire, for example, I was in the basement when the first plane hit the building. And at that moment, I thought it was an electrical generator that blew up at that moment. A person comes running into the office saying 'explosion, explosion, explosion.' When I look at this guy; has all his skin pulled off of his body. Hanging from the top of his fingertips like it was a glove. And I said, what happened? He said the elevators. **What happened was the ball of fire went down with such a force down the elevator shaft on the 58th (50A) – freight elevator, the biggest freight elevator that we have in the North Tower, it went out with such a force that it broke the cables. It went down, I think seven flights. The person survived because he was pulled from the B3 level. But this person, being in front of the doors waiting for the elevator, practically got his skin vaporized.**" [Read his entire statement here.](#)

That wasn't a slip. On September 11, 2002, Rodriguez was interviewed by CNN:

"And at that terrible day when I took people out of the office, **one of them totally burned because he was standing in front of the freight elevator and the ball of fire came down the duct of the elevator itself,** I put him on the ambulance." [Source](#)

In October, 2004, Rodriguez filed a 237-page lawsuit (since dismissed) against the United States of America, the Bush family, and many others, alleging a massive conspiracy to commit and cover up the crimes of 9/11. The suit covered the gamut of 9/11 conspiracy theories, and for good measure threw in accusations of election fraud, drug running, and other crimes. It even suggested that United flight 93 may have been shot down with a "high-powered microwave

weapon."

Yet the lawsuit made no mention of what today is Rodriguez's most important "evidence": the basement explosion. Rodriguez had to throw that claim into the stew pot in an affidavit in 2006.

People are entitled to change their minds and to form new hypotheses. But Rodriguez's current argument is based solely on incredulity: he says he (now) doesn't believe that things could have happened as the official version states. Therefore the official version must be wrong. End of debate. Tell the world about the big lie. That fallacy is the basis for most 9/11 conspiracy theories.

"I was there!" is Rodriguez's defiant cry. Yes, but he was not everywhere, and I will demonstrate that he shows a very poor understanding of some of the events of September 11, 2001. That wouldn't be an issue if he wasn't using that misunderstanding to spread misinformation. If I wanted to know the status of a military campaign, I wouldn't ask a solitary soldier in the midst of battle. The 9/11 conspiracists would, and they would carefully choose a soldier whose story supports their preconceptions. The moral of the story of [the blind men and the elephant](#) is lost on them.

Rodriguez has changed and exaggerated his story, which needs no embellishment. In his public presentations he repeats many falsehoods about the events of 9/11 and about the subsequent investigations. It only requires a few minutes of fact-checking to correct these errors, but Rodriguez will not take the time to do that. Instead, he relies on incompetents and liars for support and information about 9/11.

I would like Mr. Rodriguez to think about this: suppose he was falsely accused of murder. Would he want the prosecutor to use the "Rodriguez standards of evidence?"

William Rodriguez has much to offer the world. I fear that these valuable things have been subsumed by misdirected anger. I can't begin to imagine the pain of the nightmare he's been through, but accusing the wrong people of murder won't bring his friends back. Traveling to places where the U.S. is unpopular and using his hero status to accuse the U.S. of perpetrating the 9/11 attacks shows colossally bad judgment.

This is a difficult story to write. Rodriguez is a complex person: a victim of terrorism who shines in the limelight; a man with a generous heart who senselessly accuses people of horrible crimes; a man who claims his words have been twisted or ignored by the press, but who [says](#) he knows how to manipulate the media; a likeable hero who sometimes behaves abominably; a leader of the "9/11 truth movement" who is an ardent activist against the truth.

I hope this paper can help to put some of the events of 9/11 in context for Mr. Rodriguez, to help him see through the "fog of war" that he experienced, and to point

him towards the path of rational thinking and ethical behavior.

Part 1: A Summary of William Rodriguez's Statements and Claims

Please click on the blue [links](#) for much more information

["The Mindset of the Malaysian people has been changed forever on the 9/11 events after seeing the latest evidence."](#) –Malaysia's National News Service

Rodriguez travels with crackpots and Holocaust deniers to tell the world that 9/11 was an inside job. Citing this information, Muslim clerics march on a U.S. embassy. Venezuela's National Assembly calls for a new investigation to include the possibility of U.S. complicity in the attacks. Rodriguez is proud of these achievements. Back in the U. S., Rodriguez speaks at a neo-Nazi conference and, not surprisingly, gets a speaking invitation from the world's top anti-Semites. In December, 2006 he announces his conversion to Islam and says that the aim of American media is to criminalize Muslims.

[Rodriguez says he's not a conspiracy theorist. That's false.](#)

"Criminal minds within our own government were involved in this pre-planned process. ...the official story is a lie...it was a complete whitewash...9/11 is a giant illusion"

[Rodriguez sues the U.S. and just about everyone in it, for just about everything.](#)

Then he claims that he withdrew from the suit, and that the suit was not dismissed by the court. Those claims are false.

["I'm the last survivor pulled from the rubble." "I saved hundreds of people."](#)

These claims are false. Rodriguez's story is dramatic enough and needs no embellishment.

["They wanted my testimony behind closed doors. Everybody was testifying on national TV."](#)

That's one of several false claims Rodriguez makes about the 9/11 Commission and its hearings. Very few of the people who appeared before the Commission did so at public hearings. Was he the only person to testify behind closed doors? Was his account edited out of the final report? Did Bush say, "We don't need an investigation?" Did the Commission only answer a few of the Family Steering Committee's questions? Did the Commission not interview rescuers who were in the building?

[Rodriguez goes on the record with NIST, and agrees with the official version of the basement explosion.](#)

...But did an independent investigation prove that the towers were destroyed by "controlled demolition?"

["The press and the government have known about our stories all along but have been suppressing our words in order to spread lies to the](#)

American people about what happened."

"He was offered a congressional seat and millions of dollars in campaign finance."

"It wasn't long before the Republicans recognised the power of his appeal..." But, "I will be set for life if Hillary wins."

Rodriguez claims to have seen a 9/11 hijacker "casing the towers."

"My story has not changed." But, "It is a well known fact that I was believing the government official story early on. As I asked questions and put things together, the whole thing changed from their side and also from mine." Then, "I do not say there were bombs in the building."

Two incompatible statements followed by a false statement. Rodriguez does say that there were bombs in the WTC towers, and several aspects of his story have changed drastically. His account of what he heard in the basements has changed. Perhaps the greatest change is that Rodriguez used to blame al Qaeda for the 9/11 attacks. Now he blames George Bush for sponsoring the terrorist attacks as an excuse to invade Iraq. His distrust of the government began more than a year after the attacks when he learned that the 9/11 Commission wouldn't include any family members of victims...or did that distrust begin within days, or weeks?

"Once my story came out, some people even joked, they say "Oh, this is Superman. This is a false story because the guy did incredible things on that day."

This is less a criticism than an observation about the "fog of war" that may explain the incredulity that some people felt when hearing Rodriguez's story: in his retellings, his timeline of certain events is off by nearly an hour. It would have taken superhuman effort to do what Rodriguez actually did, in the time he allots for those achievements.

Rodriguez's ascent in the north tower: mysterious smaller explosions?

Suspicious activity on the 34th floor?

"Oh my God, that's an empty floor, what's going on?" "No construction had been underway and, in fact, a special access key was needed to make an elevator stop at that floor." These statements are false.

21 Floors of the North Tower collapsed when Rodriguez was on the 39th floor? Preposterous!

More claims by Rodriguez:

NORAD "stood down?" WTC 7 had only small fires? The official collapse explanation is that jet fuel melted the columns? No steel frame building ever fell

due to fire? Only FEMA was allowed to investigate? Steel was whisked away to hide evidence? The Patriot Act eliminated 50 years of civil rights? Rodriguez only deals with "doctorates in the matter" and has spoken with many research institutions? The elevators prove that the explosion came from below? The sprinkler system shouldn't have been activated? It would "explain a lot" if I were gay?

Part 2: Information about the towers, elevators, shafts, jet fuel dispersion, and similarities between other accounts and Rodriguez's

[WTC Site Overview, FDNY command post locations, stairway info, site where Rodriguez trapped](#)

[WTC Elevators and Elevator Shaft Continuity](#)

[Descriptions of the jet fuel dispersion in the towers](#)

[Accounts of Tower Structural Instability and Expected Collapse](#)

[Comparison of witness accounts to Rodriguez story: Timing of explosions](#)

[Comparison of witness accounts to Rodriguez story: Burn injuries](#)

[Some people near the aircraft impacts didn't hear them](#)

Part 3: Eyewitness Accounts From Inside the Towers

[Inside the Towers: Summary of Witness Accounts](#): Reports of Jet Fuel/ Kerosene, Fireballs, Damage to Elevators & Shafts, Injuries In and Near Elevators, Fallen Elevators, Fires, Damage Below Impact Zones

[Inside the North Tower: Witness Accounts, Floors 91-60](#)

[Inside the North Tower: Witness Accounts, Floors 59-02](#)

[Inside the North Tower: Witness Accounts, Plaza & Concourse Lobbies, Basement Levels](#)

[Inside the South Tower: Witness Accounts](#)

[Conclusion: Will William Rodriguez do the right thing?](#)

Next: "The mindset of the Malaysian people has been changed forever"

This commenting system is now disabled as we have moved to a new system.
Please revisit
www.911blogger.com
to be redirected.

REMINDER: Please reserve this thread for questions for Mr. Rodriguez.

Please be patient waiting for a response.

reprehensor | [Homepage](#) | 08.17.06 - 7:52 pm | <#>

What is the status of the reported Venezuelan government investigation into the events of 9/11?

CJ | 08.17.06 - 8:03 pm | <#>

As best as you can recall, exactly how many seconds elapsed between the time of the explosion you heard in the basement and the first plane impact above?

CJ | 08.17.06 - 8:04 pm | <#>

have you personally threatened in any way as a result of your brave stance on 9/11?

Chris | [Homepage](#) | 08.17.06 - 8:06 pm | <#>

*have you been personally threatened in any way as a result of your brave stance on 9/11?

Chris | [Homepage](#) | 08.17.06 - 8:06 pm | <#>

Dis you watch the movie WORLD TRADE CENTER? What are your thoughts on this movie?

Chana | 08.17.06 - 8:07 pm | <#>

at least give us a small hint as to what the big news is. please? haha

Chris | [Homepage](#) | 08.17.06 - 8:09 pm | <#>

Mr. Rodriguez,

i have heard you mention numerous times that you were an experienced magician. When evidence suggests the bombs in the basement i cant help but think it was a distractionary magic-trick like event. The planes crash near the top to captivate outsiders attention there, all while there are bombs going off down below. It reminds me of a magic wand exploding with sparks.. the magician will do something crafty while the audience is distracted by the wand. Did experience in that field help you or give insight in any way to the events of 9/11?

robbie (the beheading hoax guy | [Homepage](#) | 08.17.06 - 8:17 pm | <#>

Mr. Rodriguez,

You mentioned in a previous thread that you are no longer involved with Jimmy Walter and his organization. Can you share with us your reasons why?

Chris Rose | [Homepage](#) | 08.17.06 - 8:26 pm | <#>

did you sense an aura of evil when you shook george bush's hand?

wolfowitz in sheep's clothing | 08.17.06 - 8:27 pm | <#>

It was good seeing you speak at the LA 9/11 conference. I swear I don't think there was adry eye in the house, and I've been making sure to spread the online video of the talk around.

Anyways, is it possible the explosions you guys felt below you were van explosions? There's multiple mainstream sources from 9/11 on tv that says the FBI clearly believes there was vans filled with explosions parked below the WTC, meant to go off right around the time the planes went in:

I think these are MSNBC or other affilitate clips:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m...h?v=m3su9mWta-M>

and

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l...h?v=lqdrUMfax8I>

pockybot | 08.17.06 - 8:28 pm | <#>

Mr. Rodriguez,

Would you please issue a statement affirming your commitment to the United States Constitution and the rule of law?

I am afraid this Venezuela stuff will be used against 9/11Truth in an underhanded plot to paint Truthers as anti-American.

Anonymous | 08.17.06 - 8:31 pm | <#>

Do you have a response to 911myth's hit piece on your testimony?

http://911myths.com/html/william..._rodriguez.html

Killtown | [Homepage](#) | 08.17.06 - 8:45 pm | <#>

Might sound odd to some but I just want to ask straight forward:

Who do you think was behind the attacks on 9/11 ?

Arno Nym | 08.17.06 - 8:47 pm | <#>

Mr. Rodriguez, you have mentioned that you heard strange movement on the 34th floor. This is the floor where FBI agent John O'Neill was supposedly working. There are also reports of people doing construction on that floor. What made you think that it was a hollowed out empty floor without equipment? Do you have any additional information on what was supposed to be on that floor? can you go into any further detail about what you heard and what you think was happening on that floor? thanks for takeing the time to answer our questions, you're an inspiration to us all.

truth911.net | [Homepage](#) | 08.17.06 - 8:55 pm | <#>

did you sense an aura of evil when you shook george bush's hand?

wolfowitz in sheep's clothing | 08.17.06 - 8:27 pm | <#>

hahaha, great question. great name too by the way.

Chris | [Homepage](#) | 08.17.06 - 8:57 pm | <#>

If I may ask another question, do you or know anybody that can concur with Scott Forbes' "power down" claim in the South Tower?

Killtown | [Homepage](#) | 08.17.06 - 9:01 pm | <#>

Do you have any idea which core columns were destroyed during the initial blast in the basement? I am trying to determine what central columns had been destroyed during the time leading up to the collapse, and which ones were destroyed at the onset of (or during) the collapse itself. Any clues you have that may aid this analysis would be extremely helpful.

Luke | 08.17.06 - 9:06 pm | <#>

Over the years you worked in the towers, did you ever use access ports in the main vertical columns for periodic inspection?

Erin S. Myers | 08.17.06 - 9:47 pm | <#>

How many of your co-workers can back up what you are saying about the explosions in the basement? And have any of them gone on record saying so?

Woody | 08.17.06 - 10:31 pm | <#>

William, you are doing an amazing job! God bless you!

My question is about the victims who were set ablaze in the lobby of the towers. Here is one such account regarding a lady in the North Tower:

Mutuanot was in the lobby of Tower One when she heard the first explosion. Thinking it was a bomb like the terrorist attack in 1993, she turned to run, looking over her shoulder as flames leaped from a freight elevator shaft cooking her back and legs and right cheek.

"...It was a fireball with sand and heat, like a hurricane of fire," she said.

The lobby windows shattered as she stumbled out of the building and fell. She could not regain her footing. Her husband, who had not yet entered the building, arrived at her side.

"I kept asking my husband, `Did I lose my foot? Did I lose my foot?' " she said.... <http://www.chron.com/disp/story....nt/1051698.html>

I read that a number of people were set ablaze in and around the lobbies of the towers, and the lobby of the Towers were severely damaged, as if a bomb had blown up there.

Furthermore, even one of the Naudet brothers came across one such human torch, but despite the fact that the Naudets are photo journalists, he decided not to video this evidence. I believe you also encountered at least one such flaming victim as well.

How do you account for these burning victims and smashed lobbies when the planes struck almost 800 feet above?

The basements are much, much closer to the lobbies than where the planes hit far atop. My feeling is that **explosions in the basements** are what set these people on fire & wrecked the lobbies. What do you think?

Anonymous | 08.17.06 - 10:41 pm | <#>

One testimony referred to a "50 ton press in the basement being evaporated" or something to that effect. Was this a printing press or some other type of press? Can you confirm this and/or add any other details?

Kevin. Denver | 08.17.06 - 10:55 pm | <#>

Was it a fifty ton "capacity" press, or a press weighing fifty tons. Not a trick question, but working with machines, I've seen this innocent confusion before.

A "50 Ton Iron Worker", is smaller than a refrigerator.

Erin S. Myers | 08.17.06 - 11:42 pm | <#>

Thanks for all the questions; I am a little busy packing for a trip to speak in San Jose, California this weekend. I will answer as much as possible.

William Rodriguez

What is the status of the reported Venezuelan government investigation into the events of 9/11?—CJ

When I left Venezuela couple of months ago, I had the promise of being called back to address the National Assembly and to begin an investigation. Nicholas Maduro was the president of the National Assembly at that time. Many global events took precedence with Venezuela and we were put in the backlog. The Good news is the Mr. Maduro is a well researched person on 9/11 and was just, couple of days ago, upgraded from that position to the number 2 spot in the government, Prime Minister of Foreign Relations, This makes our position more important and viable. When in Venezuela, Mr. Maduro ordered a security detail for Mr. Walters and me. Very strange indeed to be protected with

bodyguards. They figured that there was a possibility of an attempt and their government accused of being behind it. So we were protected. The money spent over there was over 16,000 dollars to do the outreach, etc. Of course, now that I do not belong to reopen911.org, I will have to raise funds to do the next trip over there and will have a future fundraising to continue this effort. While in there, I met with the top government officials but never had the chance to meet with Chavez even though he was aware of our visit but with the Presidential elections in Chile and Bolivia, he was flying all the time. We have a momentum there and it should be exploited as well.

As best as you can recall, exactly how many seconds elapsed between the time of the explosion you heard in the basement and the first plane impact above?

CJ

WR- it was about 4 to 6 seconds after

Have you personally threatened in any way as a result of your brave stance on 9/11?

Chris

WR- Yes, many times. Also in a subtle way by many reporters- things like, it is better if you do not talk about this or that because you can be killed, etc.

Did you watch the movie WORLD TRADE CENTER? What are your thoughts on this movie?

Chana |

WR- Yes Chana, also they had a special screening for us. I met with the production company of Oliver Stone, before they started filming to clear claims and doubts about the filming, number one they did not want conflict with my story and number 2, to tell us that the film will not cover anything of the events, meaning what made 9/11 happen, but it was going to be an emotional story of 2 people and their families duress during that time. I gave around 14 interviews last week for all media about my views that, we expect the next film of 9/11 to be more in-depth of what really happened on that day.

Mr. Rodriguez,

I have heard you mention numerous times that you were an experienced magician. When evidence suggests the bombs in the basement I can't help but think it was a

distractionary magic-trick like event. The planes crash near the top to captivate outsiders attention there, all while there are bombs going off down below. It reminds me of a magic wand exploding with sparks... the magician will do something crafty while the audience is distracted by the wand. Did experience in that field help you or give insight in any way to the events of 9/11?

robbie (the beheading hoax guy)

WR- Robbie, it is true, I was a magician for 30 years and have actual videos of my shows at the towers!!! I was trained to investigate claims of the paranormal by one of the best magicians around (retired) and one of the leading investigators of phenomena. Mr. James Randi www.randifoundation.org , little did I know that after 9/11 I was going to use those same skills to investigate what happened. Magic is the business of creating illusions and to make believe. 9/11 is nothing more than the David Copperfield's at the White House fooling us and hiding under heir sleeves the other cards.

Mr. Rodriguez,

You mentioned in a previous thread that you are no longer involved with Jimmy Walter and his organization. Can you share with us your reasons why?

Chris Rose

WR- Chris, it is true. Due to Mr. Walter's position on the theory that they used blue screen technology to superimpose the planes, I found it difficult to continue since as a spokesperson we should have a clear strategy and I do not believe that theory. I am grateful for Mr. Walter's support but my reputation and respect of the families is more solid and should not be altered by speculations. I wish him the best since he has done a lot to get the truth out. It was a difficult decision as you may understand since it was the only support I was getting to get the truth out. But, I was homeless before and I learn to manage (smile).

Did you sense an aura of evil when you shook George bush's hand?

wolfowitz in sheep's clothing

WR-I felt him to be condescending and he actually said, "Isn't God great? He used you as a tool of his work..." I did not feel any Charisma whatsoever. Now, when Hillary walked on

the White House, all the heads turned around and the magnetism was obvious at the same event.

It was good seeing you speak at the LA 9/11 conference. I swear I don't think there was a dry eye in the house, and I've been making sure to spread the online video of the talk around.

Anyways, is it possible the explosions you guys felt below you were van explosions? There's multiple mainstream sources from 9/11 on tv that says the FBI clearly believes there was vans filled with explosions parked below the WTC, meant to go off right around the time the planes went in...

WR-Thanks, the LA event was very emotional for me, a lot of interaction with everybody made it more soothing. Every time I do a speech, it affects me because it is reliving the moment. About the vans... I would not know since it happened below me.

Mr. Rodriguez,

Would you please issue a statement affirming your commitment to the United States Constitution and the rule of law?

I am afraid this Venezuela stuff will be used against 9/11Truth in an underhanded plot to paint Truthers as anti-American.

Anonymous

WR-I do, I believe in my country, but not in what my government is doing and as a patriot, I feel I have the responsibility to protect what we believe in. We are Americans and we will protect our "old" Constitution that worked for so many centuries but has been chipped away by some. I also will go to any countries that will listen to us and that is willing to understand what we are doing.

Do you have a response to 911myth's hit piece on your testimony?

http://911myths.com/html/william..._rodriguez.html

Killtown

WR- Killtown, you guys are great!!, my response is easy. I was there, he was not. I have

met with everybody in the government and I doubt he has. I have the respect of my community and of those who were saved that day. I always talk about explosion, not bombs- since I am not an explosives expert. He says-A jet fuel fireball erupted upon impact and shot down at least one bank of elevators. The fireball exploded onto numerous lower floors, including the 77th and 22nd; the West Street lobby level; and the B4 level, four stories below ground- Very strange indeed ,since there were only one elevator shaft (the 50A car) that went all the way to B6, the operator was inside, Mr. Griffith and he survived with a broken ankles. He should have died burnt since on this theory the ball of fire went down. He is alive and well and I will interview him in the future to clear the disinformation.

William Rodriguez | 08.18.06 - 12:20 am | <#>

Might sound odd to some but I just want to ask straight forward:

Who do you think was behind the attacks on 9/11 ?

Arno Nym | 08.17.06 - 8:47 pm | <#>

WR- We are still investigating

Mr. Rodriguez, you have mentioned that you heard strange movement on the 34th floor. This is the floor where FBI agent John O'Neill was supposedly working. There are also reports of people doing construction on that floor. What made you think that it was a hollowed out empty floor without equipment? Do you have any additional information on what was supposed to be on that floor? can you go into any further detail about what you heard and what you think was happening on that floor? thanks for takeing the time to answer our questions, you're an inspiration to us all.

truth911.net | Homepage | 08.17.06 - 8:55 pm | <#>

WR- because I had lunch many times there. I had a closet-mini office on the 33rd floor and I will go there with my master key not to be bothered by supervisors at my lunch hour. I doubt O'Neill was there since I never saw anybody there. The possibility of course, exists. I was cared for the first time of my ordeal and some instinct told me to bypass that floor. I heard a loud srtching noise, heavy equipment.

If I may ask another question, do you or know anybody that can concur with Scott Forbes' "power down" claim in the South Tower?

Killtown | Homepage | 08.17.06 - 9:01 pm | #

WR- it was customary couple of times a year to have power down in both buildings to test the power levels, the pumps and the generators. Sadly the person in charge of that was Mechanical Supervisor Mr. Delleo. He died that day.

Do you have any idea which core columns were destroyed during the initial blast in the basement? I am trying to determine what central columns had been destroyed during the time leading up to the collapse, and which ones were destroyed at the onset of (or during) the collapse itself. Any clues you have that may aid this analysis would be extremely helpful.

Luke | 08.17.06 - 9:06 pm | #

WR- Remember that the steel to prove that, was sold weeks after to Malaysia , china and Korea... to make paper clips. Clear destruction of evidence.

Over the years you worked in the towers, did you ever use access ports in the main vertical columns for periodic inspection?

Erin S. Myers | 08.17.06 - 9:47 pm | #

WR-I was just the janitor in charge of the stairwells. Not the Structural inspector for ABM.

How many of your co-workers can back up what you are saying about the explosions in the basement? And have any of them gone on record saying so?

Woody | 08.17.06 - 10:31 pm | #

WR-Many have done television interviews wich I have. Many reunions on TV as well with people I saved who came forward during that time. Most of them of course in Spanish!!!!!! There is also 3 Televison Specials, one from Colombia and 2 from Chile, that put the pieces together with all the other witnesses.

William, you are doing an amazing job! God bless you!

My question is about the victims who were set ablaze in the lobby of the towers. Here is one such account regarding a lady in the North Tower:

Mutuanot was in the lobby of Tower One when she heard the first explosion. Thinking it

was a bomb like the terrorist attack in 1993, she turned to run, looking over her shoulder as flames leaped from a freight elevator shaft cooking her back and legs and right cheek. "...It was a fireball with sand and heat, like a hurricane of fire," she said.

The lobby windows shattered as she stumbled out of the building and fell. She could not regain her footing. Her husband, who had not yet entered the building, arrived at her side.

"I kept asking my husband, 'Did I lose my foot? Did I lose my foot?' " she said.... <http://www.chron.com/dispatch/story...nt/1051698.html>

I read that a number of people were set ablaze in and around the lobbies of the towers, and the lobby of the Towers were severely damaged, as if a bomb had blown up there. Furthermore, even one of the Naudet brothers came across one such human torch, but despite the fact that the Naudets are photo journalists, he decided not to video this evidence. I believe you also encountered at least one such flaming victim as well. How do you account for these burning victims and smashed lobbies when the planes struck almost 800 feet above?

The basements are much, much closer to the lobbies than where the planes hit far atop. My feeling is that explosions in the basements are what set these people on fire & wrecked the lobbies. What do you think?

Anonymous | 08.17.06 - 10:41 pm | #

WR- thanks for your kind words. I said many times that when I got back to the basement after escorting a person totally burnt and 14 people from my office out of the building, there were sprinklers going off on the basement and not on the upper floors. Also when I got to the lobby, the passenger elevators in the field of view , their doors were popped open sideways like a pyramid, from the bottom up.

One testimony referred to a "50 ton press in the basement being evaporated" or something to that effect. Was this a printing press or some other type of press? Can you confirm this and/or add any other details?

Kevin. Denver | 08.17.06 - 10:55 pm | #

WR- first time I heard this.

Was it a fifty ton "capacity" press, or a press weighing fifty tons. Not a trick question, but

working with machines, I've seen this innocent confusion before.

A "50 Ton Iron Worker", is smaller than a refrigerator.

Erin S. Myers | 08.17.06 - 11:42 pm | #

WR-same answer as above.

/thanks you all for all your questions and God Bless you all.

Please continue to educate yourself about the details and from the bottom of my heart .

Thanks!!!!!!

Please support this website!!!

William Rodriguez

William Rodriguez | 08.18.06 - 12:42 am | #

Hi William. I am curious. Did you have the chance to Oliver Stone about his thoughts on what actually occurred on 9/11. With his history of the "JFK" movie, I would think he would be inquisitive enough to doubt the "official" conspiracy theory.

People here in America are proud of you. Keep up the great fight.

Cosmo | 08.18.06 - 12:47 am | #

Hi Mr Rodriguez. Could you please elaborate on the 9/11 "hijackers" that you communicated with - while they were casing the WTC? Thanx for your time.

[http://www.nydailynews.com/front...5p- 175130c.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/front...5p-175130c.html)

valis | [Homepage](#) | 08.18.06 - 2:00 am | #

test

William Rodriguez | 08.18.06 - 7:10 am | <#>

Good morning, Mr. Rodriguez.

Erin S. Myers | 08.18.06 - 7:32 am | <#>

I have only one question for William.

William, you were 5 floors underground when #event 1 took place, how do you know it was a plane hitting the 95th floor? Did you see it?

TY.

brian | 08.18.06 - 8:36 am | <#>

Dear William

What were your thoughts when you tried to tell our goverment what happened,and it fell upon deaf ears?

WISDOM | 08.18.06 - 9:44 am | <#>

Mr. Rodriguez, Can you tell me if there were people moving in and out of the building weeks or months before 9/11?

Did you see people moving things in the buildings?

Can you tell me how accessable the core columns are from the stairwell, and would anyone need to destroy dry wall to access them?

Finally, how often were the stairs used by people, and could someone move around in the stairwells fairly easy without being noticed?

Keep up your good work, and please make a written record of your statements and have them notarized. These people are ruthless and god forbid anything happens to you we would need your hard work to carry on in your absense.

RemoveBush | 08.18.06 - 11:54 am | <#>

Mr. Rodriguez,

As a 20+ veteran of the the towers, can you comment on the security measures (both general policies and specific changes to those policies) before and after the 1993 attack, and before 9/11? Was there any noticable changes in policy that you would have known about in the months before both attacks? I know this is a very general question, but every little detail gives great insight into these events.

imgstacke | 08.18.06 - 1:23 pm | <#>

Hi William, it was great seeing you in LA your speech had me in tears, my question is Ive seen reports saying that you saw one of the hijackers in the weeks before 9/11 is this true and are you 100% positive that it was one of the so called hijackers and just not someone who might of looked like them, thank you.

Max Power | 08.18.06 - 4:01 pm | <#>

great question Max, i was wondering the same thing.

Chris | [Homepage](#) | 08.18.06 - 6:56 pm | <#>

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7th December 2006, 02:53 AM

#30

Oliver

Philosopher



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Mr. Rodriguez replied to my Email asking to clarify the confusion in this thread:

Originally Posted by **William Rodriguez**

I am on a tour through England. I read the thread and to clarify something I said many times and many times have been changed by the press and everyone involved is that I did experience an explosion before the plane hit. I am not an expert in explosives and do not say it is a bomb like everyone has quoted me. I have many witnesses that experienced the same thing , not only Mr. Felipe David but others as well. They were available to the 9/11 Commission and never called. I was part from the very begining for the creation of this Commission and we were not treated well at all. The families created a Family Steering Committee to post questions and we were shunned. I disagree with James Randi that I joined the Conspiracy nuts. I personally told him that I did not want to be used by them or anybody else but was steadfastly expressing the truth of what happened that day. My testimony was even changed by CNN written editorial that does not match my actual interview video with them. My story has not changed, and though I respect Randi, I totally disagree with him on that point. I am an eyewitness and my testimony is used in court. I experienced the event. I testified about it. I agree that there are many conspiracy theories out there. But I am basing my mission on my experience, not speculation. Within the first 3 months after I was pulled from the rubble I appeared on close to 14 television specials in spanish talking about the same thing. At that time I did not know about any conspiracy or questioning the goverment. I did not even know of any 9/11 truth movement underground.

I do not have anything to gain. Economically, I was even homeless and not even my closest friends were there to give me a hand. Fame? definitely not, I already made history for my work "after" the event, helping the families and survivors, I worked on countless of programs for my community including the undocumented and my fight for the first responders that are dying

because of "Ground Zero syndrome" the health problems after the collapse of the towers. On this issue we were told 5 years ago that we were "crazy" to think that the government would allow a health catastrophe like this to happen. Years later and through court papers of a suit against the EPA , we found out not only that they knew, but the allow it as well. And now 23 first responders have died and countless others are sick. So sorry if I do not take the goverment explanations at full face.

Last, funny everybody brings the position that the ball of fire went down the center elevator shaft and exploded in the basement, since the actual elevator operator of the 50A car is alive and after braking both ankles did not get burned by any of this. He should have been burned alive. He was never called to testify.

William Rodriguez

"We are talking about having to write for a 12 year old audience.

Randi truly is Amazing." [LukeT](#)

"Wow...just wow. At least he's at his computer and not out driving around." [CHF](#)

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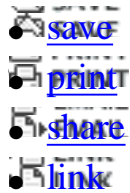
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Terror in America: Escapees - One week on, survivors tell of the

[Independent, The \(London\)](#), [Sep 18, 2001](#) by [Thomas Sutcliffe](#)

IT WAS a good day to be late for work. As Ian Robb, a Leeds-born personnel manager for a financial services firm, pushed into the lobby of the north tower of the World Trade Centre on Tuesday morning he was already running half-an-hour behind - it was already past 8.45am. His sense of flustered impatience must have been compounded when he just missed one of the express lifts for the upper floors. Mild exasperation surely mounted to irritated frustration when the elevator he did catch stopped moving almost immediately and lodged in the lift shaft. It was, classically, one of those "why me?" moments.

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Speculation has taken us to some strange places in the past week - to the flight deck of a jet plane in which office windows are looming with mesmerising speed, to

the boarding gate at which a young man queues quietly alongside the women and children he's about to kill. But it hasn't taken us anywhere quite as insistently as inside those two towers.

As the dust settles some clarity is emerging, including the stark inverted ratio between address and chances of survival - the higher the first, the lower the second.

Stanley Praitnith arrived at his desk in the loan department of Fuji Bank on the 81st floor of the south tower well before 9am. He was sitting there when he saw the first blossom of fire and smoke from the north tower and moved quickly for the lifts. Three floors above him, Brian Clark, who worked at a brokerage firm, heard the announcements assuring tenants that they should remain in their offices and stayed put. Praitnith got out at the 78th floor interchange only to encounter a security guard who assured him that they would be far safer were they were.

Advertisement

Across the plaza in the north tower, nobody could have heard announcements even if they had been made. Dianna Del Fontes, was sitting behind the reception desk of the law firm where she worked when the first plane hit, some 10 floors above her. The blast shattered the double doors to the lobby and blew her off her chair. Incredible as it might sound now, the urgency of the situation took time to sink in. With flames just across the hall, Ms Del Fontes closed the door to the firm's conference room to call a friend, changed into the training shoes that so many New York women wear to walk to work, got her backpack and only then joined the mass of people descending the stairs. Just 10 floors below her, Norbert Peat, 42, a technician had delivered a projector. He waited for a lift back to ground level. As the doors opened, a blast of heat and smoke pushed him across the hall..

Arturo Griffith, a Panamanian, was in a lift at the time of the impact. The whole car shook and juddered as he heard an ominous noise from above

Keith Seagers, an accountant on the 25th floor, was, in theory, much closer to safety and, unlike Ms Del Fontes, he didn't wait to gather his thoughts or his things. He fled.

In the south tower, Lauren Smith, 36, a brokerage employee on the 89th floor, ignored the amplified voices telling people to stay put and took an elevator to the 78th floor - a sky lobby where local lifts met up with the express elevators to the ground. The security man who had sent Stanley Praitnath back up was either distracted or had changed his mind

In the north tower, the dust was flying. David Mancano, one of a small army of Brazilian shoeshiners who maintained the executive lustre of the brokers and dealers, said: "We were breathing dirt. It was like eating pure soil". Keith Seagers, trudging down the staircase, was struck by the lack of obvious panic: "I remember how quiet it was", he said, "An eerie silence. I wanted to help those who were finding it harder than me, but didn't really say anything. Nobody said anything. But, as we went down, people were getting more and more nervous. It seemed to be taking forever and some were clearly worried they wouldn't make it".

Some were already dependent on others: Omar Eduardo Rivera, a blind Colombian, made his way down from 70 floors up, one hand on the shoulder of his boss and the other on the harness of his guide dog.

In the south tower, Stanley Praitnath was on the phone when he looked up suddenly to see the second plane swooping towards the building. He had time to read the writing on its underside before the ceiling split open, dropping rubble and flame into his office, he dived for cover beneath his desk. Three floors above him, Brian Clark raced for the stairs. On the 81st floor, he heard a cry and forced his way through the wreckage to find Mr Praitnath trapped beneath a toppled interior wall. He pulled him out and both men started downwards again.

The huge body blow of the second impact shook loose the elevator car in which Lauren Smith was travelling, causing it to free-fall for several terrifying seconds before the emergency braking system cut in and brought it to a halt. Word travelled quickly on the stairs that a second plane had hit. Just three floors from solid ground and open air, the queue in Ms Del Fontes' staircase suddenly stopped and reversed. Someone panicked, believing the ceiling to be falling in. Only after Ms Del Fontes had been pushed two flights back up was calm restored and the steady trudge towards safety resumed. When Mr Peat finally emerged he didn't even notice that the second tower was gone, astounded by the sight of people waving and then jumping from the building he'd just left.

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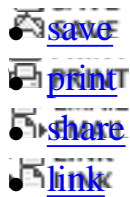
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'I'll still love you if you're burnt'

[Sunday Mirror](#), [Sep 16, 2001](#) by [LUKE SCOTT](#)

TWO married lift opera-tors survived the carnage in the World Trade Center's north tower.

Arturo Griffith, 54, was working the freight lift, on his way up to the 78th floor to meet his wife.

Carmen Griffith, 48, was working the passenger elevator between 78th and 107th floors, going to Windows on the World.

They both survived the blast. But two days passed before either spouse learned the other was alive.

They wed in 1995 and have lived and worked side by side ever since. But Tuesday's terror nearly tore them apart forever.

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"I felt the explosion and the elevator dropped," Arturo said at St. Vincents Hospital in Manhattan, where he's being treated for a broken leg. Meanwhile, on the

78th floor, Carmen inside her elevator when the blast hit.

Carmen's face and hands were severely burned as she exited the elevator.

On Thursday, he found she was alive and called her. "I told him I was a little burnt, but that I'm still me," she said.

"He said, 'I don't care. I love you'."

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William Rodriguez and NIST

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"I disagree 100% with the government story," said Rodriguez. "I met with the 9/11 Commission behind closed doors and they essentially discounted everything I said regarding the use of explosives to bring down the north tower.

And I contacted NIST previously four times without a response. Finally, this week I asked them before they came up with their conclusion that jet fuel brought down the towers, if they ever considered my statements or the statements of any of the other survivors who heard the explosions. They just stared at me with blank faces and didn't have any answers."

[Source](#)

If this encounter happened, perhaps the NIST engineers looked at Rodriguez with blank faces because they did *not* conclude that "jet fuel brought down the towers." That is a common conspiracist "straw man" argument, and is false. Further, when Rodriguez made that statement, NIST was in the middle of its investigation into the tower collapses. Its final report was released more than a year and a half later.

Rodriguez's main argument these days is that the fireball which burned people on the basement levels below him could not have been caused by jet fuel traveling down the elevator shafts.

However, here is what Rodriguez told CNN on September 11, 2002:

"And at that terrible day when I took people out of the office, one of them totally burned because **he was standing in front of the freight elevator and the ball of fire came down the duct of the elevator itself**, I put him on the ambulance." [Source](#)

And what did Rodriguez say when he had the chance to go on the public record at a meeting held by NIST big shots in New York? Remember, his constant complaint is that his claims are either suppressed or ignored. Here is his statement in full (emphases mine).

Hi, I'm William Rodriguez. I'm not with the FDNY. Actually I'm the last survivor pulled from the rubble.

I worked in the building for 20 years. I'm kind of here to pull NIST ears a little bit 'cause I was with you guys in Congress. I was here when you came the second time. And I was never called. I was never called for my testimony. In a sense, I've been the expert for the media, for the actual media, on everything related to 9/11 and the last moments of the people that were there. I worked in the building for 20 years. And I have one of the few master keys that were available on 9/11. And I was being followed by the fire department and the police – the Port Authority department on that day. I was opening the doors. And I know for a fact that you haven't called people that worked for structural employees.

If you go, obviously, to the supervisors, and you go to the company, they're going to try to keep this information. You should go directly to the employees that worked there for so many years. And get their experience. For example, I still have the pictures that I offered the NIST in Congress, on the hearings, of the stairs in the building. I still have them here. And I've never been called. I've got them all here.

Also, we told – ask the people from the asbestos removal business, because it was going on constantly. And that was one of the problems that I had with the – I was the person that cleaned the stairs in the building on the North Tower. And cleaning the stairs in the building gave me a personal look at what was going on. And I'm not an expert, but it made me an expert of what was happening that was wrong with the Port Authority. I remember on the 21st floor, on the 13th floor, there was structural damage on the staircases. I told this personally to Gene Morragio (ph) and Ed Strauss (ph) who are dead now, building operation managers of the Port Authority. And nothing was done with the structural damages. The stairs were cracking. The sheet rock, when I went up opening the doors, was falling on top of me and on top of the firemen constantly. And the *swaying of the building* made it easier for that to come off.

I remember listening to the fluorescent lights, the emergency lights that were in the building, cracking up in line; pop, pop, pop, pop, pop all the way to the bottom *because of the swiveling*. And one of the things, I mean, the sound of fear of the people on the floors was a constant reminder of what the fire department was trying to do that day, and the problems that we were experiencing. Not all the sprinkler systems worked. Not all the warble alarms on every floor worked.

The fire, the ball of fire, for example, I was in the basement when the first plane hit the building. And at that moment, I thought it was an electrical generator that blew up at that moment. A person comes running into the office saying explosion, explosion, explosion. When I look at this guy; has all his skin pulled off of his body. Hanging from the top of his fingertips like it was a glove. And I said, what happened? He said the elevators. What happened was the ball of fire went down with such a force down the elevator shaft on the 58th (50A) – freight elevator, the biggest freight elevator that we have in the North Tower, it went out with such a force that it broke the cables. It went down, I think seven flights. The person survived because he was pulled from the B3 level. But this person, being in front of the doors waiting for the elevator, practically got his skin vaporized.

And so what I'm telling you this is, as I went up – from that moment, I got this guy out. I went up, I went back

inside the building through the basement. And there was people stuck on the lower elevators, the lower freight elevators that were in the other basements. And I saved two guys from there, they are alive right now, and they haven't been called to testify what they went through either. The problems they have when they went into the elevators, how they stopped working and things like that.

The fire escapes, as being the person in charge of cleaning them, I had constant problems with the Port Authority, constant problems because they didn't enforce, for example, the no-smoking law inside the stairs. I would have people in groups of five smoking on the stairs with trashcans inside the staircases, trashcans from the floors on a constant basis. And I will tell them, "You got to get out." They'd say, you're not a cop. Only on two occasions, because I took pictures, and that's the reason I have the pictures on the stairs because I didn't want to get – I was getting warnings from my cleaning company, constantly. You didn't clean these areas. Yes, I did. Yes, I did. But they will go back and they will do it. They will leave and they will do all these problems over there.

Dr. Hill: William, we obviously need to talk to you. You have some very valuable information. **I have a note here that we attempted to contact you and weren't successful.** Could you stay around afterwards so we could talk to you a little bit?

W. Rodriguez: Sure. I would be glad to. Okay, thank you very much.

Dr. Hill: Thank you.

Source: [Transcript of NIST Public Meeting in New York City](#) – February 12, 2004, p. 70. [Dr. James Hill](#) and [Dr. S. Shyam Sunder](#) of [NIST](#), presiding.

An investigation confirmed controlled demolition?

Rodriguez: "Because that came out in the investigation that, probably that, this explosion was to weaken the base of the foundation of the building, to be synchronized with the hit on the top, so it would fall automatically." [Source \(11:50\)](#)

Note that Rodriguez does not state what investigation he is talking about. He gives the misleading impression that the official investigation came to this conclusion. It did not. No investigation did.

"Independent investigators said both towers suspiciously fell "like a house of cards," claiming that William probably heard pre-arranged detonated bomb blasts, strategically placed and timed to make it appear that the plane was the cause of the collapse." [Source](#)

I wonder when these independent investigators will be coming forward with this stunning evidence?

Meanwhile, in addition to the official NIST investigation, a major independent investigation into the cause of the collapses was done by Weidlinger Associates and others. It concluded that the collapses were caused by damage and fire. Other scientific studies were done by ARUP Fire, by the Centre of Fire Research Excellence at the University of Edinburgh, and by MIT. They do not support the conspiracist claims.

[Links to NIST & FEMA reports, 9/11 WTC Tower Collapse Analyses](#)

[Links to Fire Safety Engineering information & the Performance of Structural Steel in Fires](#)

"There is no scientific basis for the conclusion that explosions brought down the towers. That representation of our work is categorically incorrect and not in context."

– Arthur Lerner-Lam, seismologist, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

Rodriguez's contention that the basement explosions were deliberate, to damage the tower core columns, is nonsensical. There is no evidence that the elevator shaft explosions caused structural damage. Their overpressures knocked down non-load bearing walls, blew out doors, brought down false ceilings, and broke pipes. Even the 1993 truck bomb, which was the equivalent of 1,500 lbs (680 kg) of TNT, did not destroy the parking garage columns around it. The tower core columns at the basement levels were much more robust than those parking garage columns.

Damage to the WTC parking garage from the 1993 bombing. Columns not destroyed.



The people who were closest to the elevator shaft explosions were burned by jet fuel: **many of them tell us so**. High explosives do not produce large fireballs that smell of kerosene. The Hollywood-style fireballs that we see in movies and television shows are produced with fuel, commonly gasoline. Anyone close enough to a large high explosive detonation to be burned would also be reduced to many pieces by the blast. Demolition charges that are designed to cut steel produce little heat and almost no flame. Their energy is highly focused, which is why they must be placed at a precise distance from bare steel. They also must be placed on many columns of a building. They did not cause the elevator shaft explosions.

Rodriguez told me that he smelled kerosene in the basement just after the noises he heard below and above, but he somehow fails to connect that with the jet fuel that so many other people reported (jet-A fuel is basically kerosene).

For more information about the effects of different explosives on the human body, and about Jet-A fuel composition, flammability, and explosivity, see:

["Blast Injuries: Preparing for the Inevitable." Emergency Medicine Practice, Volume 8, Number 4. April, 2006](#)

[Jet A Manufacturers Safety Data Sheet](#)

[Jet A fuel has a chemical potential energy more than ten times greater than TNT \(43.3 MJ/kg vs. 4.2 MJ/kg\)](#)

[Caltech Explosion Dynamics Laboratory: Aviation Kerosene \(Jet A\) Facts](#)

[Flash point and Chemical Composition of Aviation Kerosene \(Jet A\)](#)

[NTSB: Explosion of Aviation Kerosene \(Jet A\) Vapors](#)

Conspiracists have not presented a shred of evidence that supports their controlled demolition claim, nor have they produced any evidence that the lower level blasts were due to anything but jet fuel. Their "experts" are utterly incompetent and haven't written a single paper that could pass the most basic peer review. It's 2007. I wonder what they're waiting for.

[Next: Claims of media suppression](#)

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CNN LIVE EVENT/SPECIAL

Interview With David Lim

Aired September 11, 2002 - 12:58 ET

THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT. THIS COPY MAY NOT BE IN ITS FINAL FORM AND MAY BE UPDATED.

AARON BROWN, CNN ANCHOR: Our next hero story, and it is -- a good one, I think about Port Authority officers, one who got out and one who did not. Partners, I think, we can fairly say we are about as close as partners could get, but there is, in fact, a punchline to the introduction.

David Lim worked with a bomb sniffing dog named Sirius. David joins us this morning -- or this afternoon, we should say from near ground zero -- David, it is good to see you, and does this year -- not only lost your partner in the dog, but Port Authority took terrible hit as well -- does the year marker mean anything in particular to you?

DAVID LIM, OFFICER, PORT AUTHORITY: Oh, I don't know, I need to say that it means a lot to me. This year has gone by so quickly. And I have said this to many of my coworkers today, it seems like it just happened yesterday. With the exception of the wind today, it was a beautiful day like today, and all we can do is just think about all of our lost comrades that day, 37 Port Authority police officers didn't come home that night, as well as my dog, and it's something we are never going to forget.

BROWN: I -- you actually have extraordinary story of survival to tell, but I don't want to get to it until we have talked about the dog for a second. As I remember your story, you heard this -- this crashing noise, and you said to Sirius, I'll be back, stay where you are. Is that about how it went?

LIM: Well at first, I thought that somebody had gotten a package upstairs. Our job is to check the trucks as they come into the World Trade Center, and I thought maybe something had slipped by. I should never have doubted my dog, of course, but basically I told him I had to go help the people, and I put him in his kennel, and I closed the door, and the last time I saw him alive.

BROWN: And you then made your way through the building, and it is fair to say, I think, that you are a very lucky man to be talking to anybody today?

LIM: Almost certainly. I'm very fortunate. I ended up surviving in the fourth floor of the B staircase in tower number one for about five hours before we got out, myself, Ladder Company 6 (ph) and Josephine Harris (ph).

BROWN: I remember somewhere reading that at some period in this it is -- it is if the whole world went silent, that there was this kind of absolute stillness around you. LIM: Yes. After the collapse was an eerie sort of silence. At first I thought that I was dead and this was what death was because there was not a sound and I couldn't see anything. And I just felt that this was the end. But then I heard a voice yell out whose here, and then I realized that I was still alive and I would still have that opportunity to see my wife and kids again who I had just thought about.

BROWN: And how long a -- how long a period is that from the time that you think this is in fact what death is to the time when you realized you were a little ahead of yourself?



LIM: That's one way of putting it. I guess it's hard to put into a timeframe. I -- you know time seems to work kind of funny when you're in a situation like that. It was probably no more than a few minutes, I guess, and that would be a guess.

BROWN: I'll bet it's a long few minutes.

You're back on the job. And I gather you're back in the same business you were in before, which is to keep what you gently referred to as packages out of the -- out of places they shouldn't be, bombs. You got a new partner?

LIM: Yes, I have a new partner now, Sprig (ph), and much sooner to the consternation of my wife, of course. Coming back after surviving and getting another bomb dog, you know, but she's a -- she's a wonderful woman, my wife, Diane (ph), my kids, Deborah (ph) and Michael (ph). They're great support, and they support anything that I -- that I do when it comes to this. I mean people ask me if I should have retired, since I have more than 20 years, but I feel that I will set my own retirement date. And when I'm ready, I'll retire on my own terms.

BROWN: David, be as honest with me as you can about this, do you feel any guilt for having survived?

LIM: I'll be honest, initially I did. I mean it's very hard to put into perspective the only 1 of maybe 18 people that survived the actual collapse of the Trade Center. I'm no special than anybody else. I did no more than anybody else. There were police and fire and civilians doing all kinds of good work that day. And I don't think I did any more or less than anybody else. So it was -- it was hard for me to deal with that fact. But I've come now to realize that I did survive and that I'm going to make the most of that. And maybe (UNINTELLIGIBLE) be a little bit closer to my family and friends and maybe not take life so seriously at all the time.

BROWN: That's a great way to put it.

On the subject of your friends, one of them is with you, a relatively new friend I know, William Rodriguez (ph). If Mr. Rodriguez (ph) is actually close enough, we've got a mike on him, just tell the story of how -- William, tell the story of how the two of you met. UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Well, no, we knew each other for many years. We work at the -- I work at the building. I personally in charge of all the stairs, of all the maintenance of the stairs in the building. And I knew David for probably 15, 16 years.

And at that terrible day when I took people out of the office, one of them totally burned because he was standing in front of the freight elevator and the ball of fire came down the duct of the elevator itself, I put him on the ambulance. And I came back running into the building. And the only person that I found there was Officer David Lim. And the first thing that he told me was, Willie (ph), do you have the key. Meaning if I had the master key to the building, which I have and I still have. It's over here. This is the key that opened all the doors on the staircase. It's called a T2 (ph) key. And he said let's go.

And we went up, he opened the door on the lobby. We went on the basement, number one. And there when we opened the door, the fire department was there waiting in front of the 50 car elevator, which was already gone, because the airplane, when he came through the building, broke all the cables and practically destroyed the elevator because the elevator went down seven flights of floors. And, he said to the -- to the firemen, follow me, we know the best way to go up and we have the access key. So we started going up the stairs and opening all the doors.

We got to remember that the World Trade Center was a Class A building which had three doors that did not open and one that did open. And we have to go floor by floor and opening all the doors. We were in front of the fire department. We were at the vanguard of what was happening and David was -- I remember it was so difficult because he has so much equipment on that going up the stair,

we were sweating bullets. It was so hard. And then the amount of people that was coming down the stairs were actually bumping against us. And we -- we were having a terrible time.

One person told us that there was a...

BROWN: Mr. Rodriguez (ph), did you ever think to yourself, what the heck am I doing running up these stairs when anyone in their right mind would be running down?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Well, not really, because in a moment of an emergency, we have been training a way that you have to do what it takes when it comes to an emergency. And I remembered seeing David personally going through the process of the exercises of (UNINTELLIGIBLE) because they brought people from the Port Authority to do bomb training with the -- with the dogs and stuff like that. And so I knew that that was the thing to do.

BROWN: Mr. Rodriguez (ph) and Officer Lim, it's terribly trite to say, but it's really nice to see you both. It's really nice to see you both. We hope -- we hope all of the wounds heal. Thank you both for your work and thank you for joining us on this important day.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you. LIM: Thank you.

BROWN: Thank you.

PAULA ZAHN, CNN ANCHOR: Almost a reflective action on their part to say we just did what we were trained to do.

BROWN: Yes.

ZAHN: How many times have we heard that in the course of covering this story this past year?

BROWN: And I'm not sure, but I think I heard a technical term, we were sweating bullets. I think that's a technical term, well perhaps not.

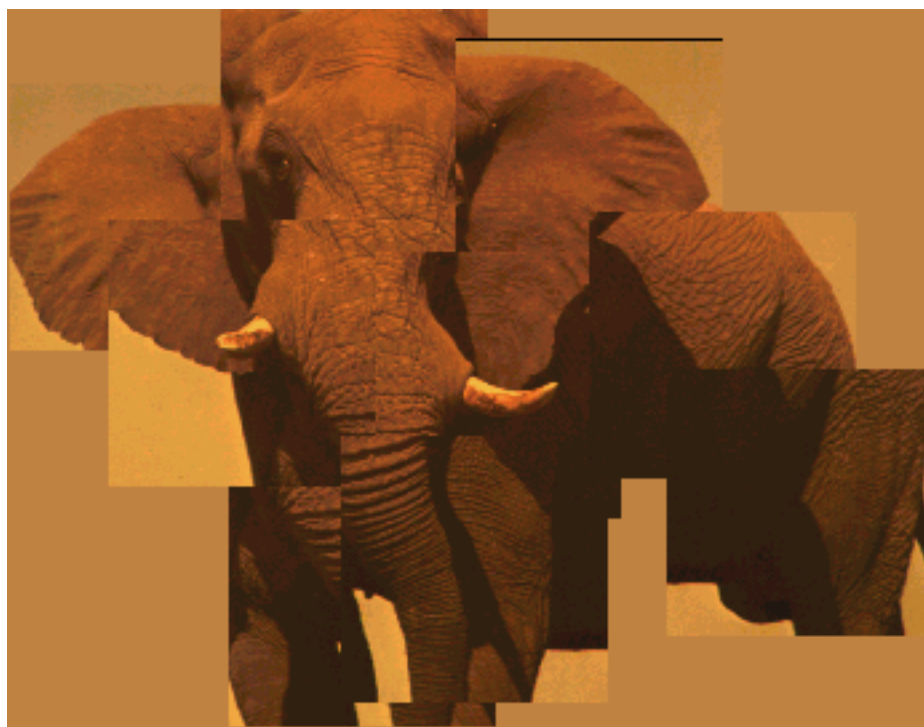
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The Blind Men and the Elephant



Please do not adjust your set!

A number of disciples went to the Buddha and said, "Sir, there are living here in Savatthi many wandering hermits and scholars who indulge in constant dispute, some saying that the world is infinite and eternal and others that it is finite and not eternal, some saying that the soul dies with the body and others that it lives on forever, and so forth. What, Sir, would you say concerning them?"

The Buddha answered, "Once upon a time there was a certain raja who called to his servant and said, 'Come, good fellow, go and gather together in one place all the men of Savatthi who were born blind... and show them an elephant.' 'Very good, sire,' replied the servant, and he did as he was told. He said to the blind men assembled there, 'Here is an elephant,' and to one man he presented the head of the elephant, to another its ears, to another a tusk, to another the trunk, the foot, back, tail, and tuft of the tail, saying to each one that that was the elephant.

"When the blind men had felt the elephant, the raja went to each of them and said to each, 'Well, blind man, have you seen the elephant? Tell me, what sort of thing is an elephant?'

"Thereupon the men who were presented with the head answered, 'Sire, an elephant is like a pot.' And the men who had observed the ear replied, 'An elephant is like a winnowing basket.' Those who had been presented with a tusk said it was a ploughshare. Those who knew only the trunk said it was a plough; others said the body was a grainery; the foot, a pillar; the back, a mortar; the tail, a pestle, the tuft of the tail, a brush.

"Then they began to quarrel, shouting, 'Yes it is!' 'No, it is not!' 'An elephant is not that!' 'Yes, it's like that!' and so on, till they came to blows over the matter.

"Brethren, the raja was delighted with the scene.

"Just so are these preachers and scholars holding various views blind and unseeing.... In their ignorance they are by nature quarrelsome, wrangling, and disputatious, each maintaining reality is thus and thus."

Then the Exalted One rendered this meaning by uttering this verse of uplift,

O how they cling and wrangle, some who claim
For preacher and monk the honored name!
For, quarreling, each to his view they cling.
Such folk see only one side of a thing.

Jainism and Buddhism. Udana 68-69:
Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant

Udana 68-69: We give a version of this well-known Indian tale from the Buddhist canon, but some assert it is of Jain origin. It does illustrate well the Jain doctrine of Anekanta, the manysidedness of things. Cf. Tattvarthaslokavartika 116, p. 806. Mihir Yast 10.2: Cf. Analects 15.5, p. 1020.

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[Randy Wang](#) rywang@cs.princeton.edu Sun Mar 19 22:18:59 PST 1995

A JANITOR'S HEROISM 'OPENS A LOT OF DOORS'

By BENJAMIN SMITH
Staff Reporter of the Sun

Seated in a comfortable red chair in the studio of Telemundo, William Rodriguez puts on his television face and begins talking to the camera: "Sound check," he begins. "My name is William Rodriguez. I worked in the building for 20 years."

If you don't watch Spanish-language television or read Hoy or El Diario, you may not be familiar with Mr. Rodriguez's even soap opera features, his thick black hair, or camera-ready poses. But for Spanish-speakers in New York, his is the face of September 11. He has been on the front page of each of the tabloids this year, and he's on Spanish-language television just about every day.

Mr. Rodriguez has earned his renown. He was the man responsible for sweeping the stairs in Tower One, the north twin tower. On September 11, he displayed astonishing courage, helping carry a badly burned man from the building and running back in twice to save more lives.

After the attacks, he founded the Hispanic Victims Group, a one-man show that covers everything from translating for survivors to helping them fill out applications to lobbying the federal government.

"He is an impressive individual," says Kenneth Feinberg, the government-appointed lawyer in charge of distributing money to victims. Mr. Rodriguez fought for months to win a letter from the Immigration and Naturalization Service assuring illegal immigrants they could accept compensation without fear of deportation.

"He went through everything with us," said Marina Arevalo, 56, a Peruvian immigrant whose son died in the attacks. "He orients us in situations where sometimes we are lost."

While Mr. Rodriguez has been good to his fellow survivors and victims, September 11 has, in a strange way, also been good for him. An amateur magician, an aspiring businessman, and a performer by nature, he had found himself in early middle age working as a janitor and

moonlighting as a computer technician.

Now, he carries in the trunk of his car a photo album that holds pictures of himself with the governor of Puerto Rico, Sila Calderon, who named him a "national hero," with Senator Clinton; and, beaming, with President Bush.

"Being a hero has opened a lot of doors," he says.

Like many, Mr. Rodriguez came to New York to improve himself. To be specific, he came to in 1982 to learn how to escape. He was an aspiring magician, and had not yet mastered the trick of escaping from strait jackets upside down.

"His English wasn't all that great at that time, but he had a great smile and he was very deft with his hands," recalled James Randi, a magician who saw him at a magicians' conference in New Jersey in the mid-1980s.

Mr. Randi, a debunker of psychics and faith healers, took Mr. Rodriguez on as an assistant in his campaign against charlatans. Mr. Rodriguez, with his cleaner's uniform and unlimited self-assurance, went back stage to gather intelligence on faith healers like W.V. Grant.

"He has always managed to do the impossible," Mr. Randi wrote of his pupil. Mr. Rodriguez says he learned so much that "I could start my own church and perform my own miracles."

But by the early 1990s, Mr. Randi had moved to Florida, and his apprentice had tired of magic. The job at the World Trade Center had also gotten more interesting: it consisted of cleaning the office of then-Governor Cuomo, and setting up the governor's press conferences.

But the bookshelves at Mr. Rodriguez's apartment in Jersey City are those of a man who thinks he can do better. His small, immaculate office — "I am a cleaner, you know" — is packed with books like "Talking the Winning Way" and "Twenty-Five Steps to Power and Mastery Over People."

The books had little to do with his day job: arriving at 8 a.m. and changing into his blue uniform in a basement locker room, Mr. Rodriguez would ride the elevator to Windows on the World, on the

107th floor. His friends who worked there — most of them are now dead — gave him a free breakfast, and by 8:30, he would be on the stairs with a broom, a dustpan, and a rag. Sweeping one of the building's three stairwells took three hours.

But Mr. Rodriguez got to work late the morning of September 11. He was still in the basement when the plane hit the tower. He thought a generator might have exploded when Felipe David ran in, screaming. Mr. David, who maintained the vending machines, was burned so badly the brown skin on his arms was white. Mr. Rodriguez took Mr. David's arm around his shoulder and ran out toward an ambulance.

Mr. Rodriguez looked up and saw the cloud of smoke. "I thought of the people at Windows," he says.

Then he turned around and ran back into the basement. He isn't sure why. "Not because I wanted to do it or because it was the right thing to do — I was driven to do it," he says. A recycling

'I had done TV before, so I knew how to manipulate the media.'

worker told him there were screams coming from an elevator shaft. Mr. Rodriguez pried the door open and saw Salvatore Giambanco, a painter, standing one floor below in rising water. He ran to where workers kept their ladders, and found the tallest one unlocked. He passed it down to Mr. Giambanco.

"I never knew his name," Mr. Giambanco said; eventually, they were reunited for the Telemundo cameras.

Mr. Rodriguez's story — borne out by witnesses and those he helped — is amazing. And most unbelievably, he headed back into the building a third time. He saw firefighters in the lobby trying to open a locked door to the stairwell he cleaned, and he opened it with his master key. He raced up to the 39th floor

— opening doors along the way — until a police officer finally ordered him to leave.

Mr. Rodriguez says he was the last one to escape Tower One alive, and he's probably not far wrong. He ran from the building as it started to shake, and dived under a fire truck on West Street just in time to be hit with a blast of dust.

By the time the second tower collapsed, Mr. Rodriguez was already a hero. But it was television that made him a leader.

At 1:36 p.m., he was still on the scene, talking by cellular phone to CNN's Aaron Brown: "As I came out of the building, we hear the rumbling and I was told, run. When I look up, everything is coming down," he said, according to a CNN transcript.

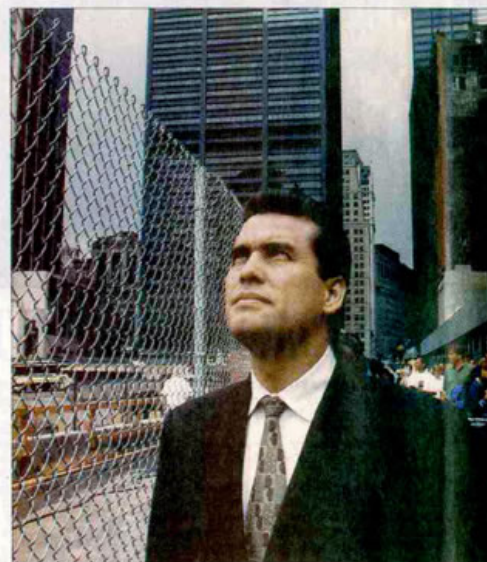
"And all of a sudden, it stopped. And we were pulled out from under the truck. But I know these officers didn't make it."

Someone nearby said, "Would you mind repeating that in Spanish," after one of Mr. Rodriguez's interviews; then someone from a Brazilian television station, he thinks, starting passing around his telephone number to members of the Spanish-language press.

When Mr. Rodriguez turned up at the temporary disaster assistance center at Pier 94 a few days later to seek help and get his bearings, he didn't expect to lead anything. But by then, his face had been all over the Spanish-language television stations. Immigrants, particularly those who spoke little or no English, spontaneously came to him for help.

"Everybody knew who I was," he marvels. And, from some of the workers, "I got more respect for having been on TV than for being a person who needed help."

Mr. Rodriguez is so comfortable on television that he's taken over as host of a Hispanic-themed show, in English, on NJN, New Jersey's public television station. He's also worked out an informal arrangement with Telemundo and Univision, he says. He's available to them at all times, and can use the stations to



TRUE HERO Trade Center maintenance man William Rodriguez saved many

help victims in particularly difficult situations, like one survivor of the towers who was an illegal immigrant caring for a disabled son.

"I had done TV before, so I knew how to manipulate the media," he says. "I give them something, and they give me something for the victims."

Mr. Rodriguez hasn't made any money with his newfound celebrity.

In fact, he is utterly broke: his landlord has stopped charging him rent and his car dealer is being flexible about the terms of the lease; but the cellular phone company and cable company have cut him off.

Last week he carried in his pocket a crisp, white Western Union receipt for

the \$300 his mother had just wire from Puerto Rico.

Although Mr. Rodriguez is much of his time teaching unsolicited immigrants how to work through forms of compensation for September 11, he has refused to apply Federal Victims Compensation from which he, as a survivor, is entitled to benefits.

"I think the money should go to families," he says. "I would feel like taking advantage of the system in a way."

Mr. Rodriguez plans to be fundraiser today in a restored Q movie theater.

"Everything fit in the place it

have from the beginning," he says.

Travels with Willie

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William Rodriguez's [lawsuit](#) against the United States of America, October, 2004:

"No reliable evidence puts any Arabs, or persons with Arab names, on any of the four diverted aircraft of 9-11"

Actually, all reliable evidence puts the hijackers on the flights, including the passenger manifests showing all of their names.

"Everybody else in the world is more prepared, and with more information about 9/11, than we are." William Rodriguez [speech](#) to the American Scholars 9/11 Symposium, June 25, 2006

Malaysia

In June, 2006, William Rodriguez visited Malaysia during a multi-country tour to tell the world that the official version of 9/11 is a lie and that the truth is being concealed by the U.S. government.

The tour, like some others WR has done, was funded by [Jimmy Walter](#). Walter is featured in this [must-see Penn & Teller episode](#) on 9/11 conspiracy theories. He has spent millions of dollars calling for a new investigation into the events of 9/11. Why he did not use those millions to fund an independent investigation is an interesting question.

From Walter's [website](#), regarding witnesses to the WTC attacks:

"What about all the witnesses? We have never found any reliable witnesses to these alleged big passenger jets. We find people who saw "something", who were home in bed with the drapes drawn and still "saw the plane" they think, because they heard the explosion."



Jimmy Walter doing his George W. Bush impression

Walter accompanied Rodriguez on the tour. Joining them to speak in Malaysia and to meet with prominent political figures was [Michael Collins Piper](#), a noted anti-Semite and Holocaust denier. This is the title of Piper's most recent (April 18, 2007) blog post:

Holocaust Education KILLS! Ban Holocaust Education NOW— Before ANOTHER school shooting happens.

Piper writes for the American Free Press, which is run by [Willis Carto](#). The Anti-Defamation League calls Carto "one of the most influential American anti-Semitic propagandists of the past 50 years." Carto: "If Satan himself, with all of his super-human genius and diabolical ingenuity at his command, had tried to create a permanent disintegration and force for the destruction of the nations, he could have done no better than to invent the Jews."

Malaysia's state religion is Islam. Native-born Malays are de facto Muslims and are subject to strict Sharia law. Malaysian civil law can also be quite strict, especially concerning free speech, criticism of the government, and people deemed to be politically threatening. Amnesty International points out that Malaysian law allows for detention for two years without trial. That two-year period is renewable indefinitely. Many people are being detained in Malaysia under those laws. [Source](#)

Malaysia's National News Agency paid keen attention to the claims of Rodriguez, Walter, and Piper:

Group Seeks Dr Mahathir's Assistance To Reopen 9-11 Investigation

PUTRAJAYA, June 12 (Bernama) -- A group of concerned Americans and their sympathisers has sought the support of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in their effort to push for an international investigation into the Sept 11 2001 (9-11) tragedy.

Representatives of the group, including a survivor of the attacks on the World Trade Centre (WTC) in New York, met Dr Mahathir here Monday with a claim that the official version of what transpired on that day was far from the truth.

American Media Asked To Dupe People, Destroy Islam, Says Expert

KUALA LUMPUR, June 13 (Bernama) — The American media is controlled by certain groups which plan to destroy the Islamic world, according to an American media expert.

Michael Collins Piper said a group of family and financial interests people in the United States were using the media to control government policies. "They will not be satisfied because Islam is the last religion standing in the way of the new world order," he added.

He said he wanted to be the "bridge-builder", to show that not all Americans supported the Jewish-controlled Bush administration policy. He said the media in the US did not report true stories. For instance, the story of William Rodriguez, a former maintenance worker at the World Trade Centre in Manhattan, as it would open up a whole new perspective of the Sept 11 terror attack on the US in 2001.

...On the fateful day, Piper said Rodriguez was talking to his supervisor when he heard a huge explosion from below the building believed to be from the mechanical room where pumps, generators and air-conditioners were located.

"It was so powerful that the walls fell on us. Then, suddenly *within minutes*, another bang on top of the tower, the one where the plane crashed into the WTC, but it sounded totally different. "Two separate events, one at the basement and one on the top. I've been working there for 20 years, I know the difference between what comes from the bottom and the top," he had said.

He said the two explosions showed there was an initiated plan to create what he believed a tragedy that was synchronised.

"I believe they had a plan to bring the building down at the same time the plane crashed into the tower. They wanted to weaken the base for that to happen."

In the incident, Rodriguez, who had the master key to the North Tower staircases, unlocked the doors and led fire-fighters up the stairwell, aiding in the evacuation of hundreds of people who might have otherwise perished. [Source](#)

Piper, writing in the American Free Press, sums up the visit:

"The international audience at the fair—some 1,000 strong—was intrigued by the fact that here were Americans—including a 9-11 survivor—telling them that it was not "the Muslims" who were responsible for 9-11, but that the conspiracy went much higher and much deeper."[Source](#)

Rodriguez was quite proud of how his message was received in Malaysia. His friend, conspiracist Nila Sagadevan, reports,

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

William Rodriguez called this morning upon his return to the US to tell me about his and Jimmy Walter's huge successes spreading the word in Malaysia about the 9/11 cover-up.

I do believe these two gentlemen may have started a firestorm in that country.

...I'm told our "ambassadors" gave several press conferences, were on prime-time TV five days running, and were received rapturously everywhere they went. Walters' movie, "Confronting The Evidence" was also aired during prime-time.

Willy mentioned that the movie triggered such an outcry that, last Friday, over 200 Islamic clerics marched on the US embassy to demand an answer to a long list of questions about 9/11. Predictably, the Marines were called in and the crowd dispersed under severe protest. While this was aired on Malaysian nightly news and caused a huge hullabaloo, we've obviously yet to hear a murmur of any of it Stateside (or, I presume, elsewhere in the West).

During a Broadcast on National News, Channel 3, at Primetime, it was stated that "The Mindset of the Malaysian people has been changed forever on the 9/11 events after seeing the latest evidence."[Source](#)

"911 In Plane Site" and "Confronting the Evidence" continue to be recognized as the most controversial video documentaries on 9/11 to date, and are being shown by Rodriguez and Walter as they travel the world.[Source](#)

Venezuela

Rodriguez accepted the invitation of Chris Bollyn, another anti-Semitic AFP writer, to travel to Venezuela and hopefully meet with its president Hugo Chavez. As Bollyn makes clear, he made the Venezuela trip at the behest of his quasi-Nazi employer Willis Carto to try to enlist Chavez in an AFP propaganda campaign (Carto had also wanted Piper to make this trip):

Although I am not at all inclined or interested in discussing American Free Press (AFP), that fired me on baseless allegations, I find myself, once again, compelled to defend my name and clarify the details of my trip

to Venezuela, which I made on behalf of Willis A. Carto, the publisher of that newspaper, last February. [Source](#)

Bollyn's intellectual leanings were known to Rodriguez. Along with his invitation to travel to Venezuela, Bollyn sent Rodriguez [an article](#) that attempted to tie Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to the 9/11 attacks. Rodriguez responded,

"HI Chris!!! Great article. I have been trying with the Venezuela's Embassy political affairs person here in Washington and no success. I will definitely be interested in going to Venezuela and talk to Chavez and his tv channel TeleSur. I believe he will not only be interested in what I have to say but will want me to talk to his emergency response experts to learn about the mistakes after 9/11 to help victims. See what you can do. I am ready to fly!!!!

Willie R."

In May, 2006, Bollyn made these claims about Rodriguez:

"Having known Rodriguez for a year and having spent many hours with him, this reporter has learned a great deal about the 9-11 attack from his personal observations, most of which he does not speak about publicly. On a recent trip to Venezuela, Rodriguez told American Free Press that he has been advised not to talk about critical evidence that he has personal knowledge of.

'I can't talk about the Israeli involvement because it would offend the Jewish families,' Rodriguez said, referring to the relatives of Jewish victims. Yet, Rodriguez has important information about the involvement of Israeli intelligence agents in the attacks.

For example, he has personal knowledge that Israeli Mossad agents, posing as employees of a moving company in New Jersey, met regularly with some of the Arab terror suspects at a video store a block from his home in Jersey City during the year prior to the attacks." [Source](#)

According to Human Rights Watch, Venezuela under Hugo Chavez is [not exactly a bastion of free speech, judicial independence, and fair treatment of political protesters](#).

Rodriguez's six weeks in Venezuela produced some results:

"Rodriguez and Walter are educating top Venezuelan officials on the evidence that 9/11 was a self-inflicted wound carried out by the military-industrial complex. They have also appeared on every Venezuelan television and radio station both private and state owned and have given huge presentations to major universities.

Upon visiting, Rodriguez said that the President of the Assembly, Nicolas Maduro's home was brimming with books, videos and documents about the 9/11 cover-up. Maduro, Venezuela's top legislator, intoned that he was ready to create an international investigative committee, looking into the "international crime scene" that is 9/11 and that this would be structured via Hugo Chavez's government."

[Source](#)

In November, 2006, the Venezuelan National Assembly called for a new investigation into the events of 9/11, to include the possibility that the U.S. government was behind the attacks. "We have worked non-stop with the officials of Venezuela to bring the truth to them. I am glad that our efforts are having the support of world leaders and we are continuing to bring the real experiences to other world leaders as well," Rodriguez said."[Source](#)

In Washington, D.C. with Nazis

Back in the U.S., In September, 2006, Rodriguez spoke about 9/11 at a [conference](#) hosted by, and attended by, many world-class neo-Nazis and Holocaust deniers.

"John Nugent, Nationalist [Nazi] activist and former congressional candidate who is now writing for the Barnes Review [a journal that promotes Holocaust denial and other neo-Nazi causes, also run by Carto] was in attendance. My wife and I hadn't seen John since before the birth of our first child....16 years ago. We were very happy to see him again, and he introduced us to Mr. Theo Junker, the former member of the Wiking division of the S.S. who courageously opened a Museum in Wisconsin dedicated to the memory of Adolf Hitler. It was indeed one of the highlights of the conference meeting this courageous patriot who continues to fight the good fight well into his 80's. God bless you, Herr Junker!" [Source](#)

Is the next story any surprise?

November, 2006: [911blogger.com](#) **Exclusive: William Rodriguez Has Been Invited To Iran**

William Rodriguez, the last survivor of the North Tower has been formally invited by the Iranian Government to give a series of presentations about 9/11 in Iran. The reason he was invited, was because they saw his presentation in front of 22,000 Muslims during his recent U.K. tour. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs thought it would be a good idea as a "Peace Mission" to bring Rodriguez to Iran. Rodriguez says that he "feels very honored that he has been tapped to do these series of presentations as a peace initiative, and he feels he will be more protected in these countries than in his own." Given that the Venezuelan Government thought enough of Willie to provide him 5 bodyguards during his stay there, I can see why. The dates are not yet specified, but will be announced in the beginning of March 2007.

Fortunately, after some deliberation Rodriguez heeded the advice of those who said, "Are you insane?" and declined Iran's invitation.

Rodriguez answers a question in an online [Q&A](#) session, August, 2006:

Q: "Might sound odd to some but I just want to ask straight forward: Who do you think was behind the attacks on 9/11?"

A: Rodriguez- "We are still investigating"

December, 2006: Rodriguez announces his conversion to Islam.

William Rodriguez: From 9/11 to Islam

If you haven't heard it, it isn't surprising. A quick google search doesn't help much either. Seems the media doesn't find much interest in stories that spin Islam in a way that contradicts the 'official spin'. In any case, William Rodriguez was the last person to be pulled out of the rubble on 9/11 (interesting video here). He announced his conversion at the 2006 Texas Dawah. Another example of the power of Islam's message. [Source](#)

The next guest on Irtiza's show requires special mention. William Rodriguez was the last person to be pulled out of the rubble on 9/11. He gave a moving account of the events of that day. He talked about his efforts to get a proper and true investigation of 9/11, about his testimony in front of Congress, and other achievements and recognitions. Then, he vowed [sic] the audience, by telling them that he had recently become a Muslim!! **He said that the aim of American media was to criminalize all the Muslims**, yet when he went to Malaysia, he received better treatment than he had ever received. He took [shahada](#) at the hands of Sheikh Yusuf Estes, Allahu Akbar! [Source](#)

Rodriguez has apparently ended his association with Jimmy Walter and the AFP crowd.* However, the messages he conveyed – spoken and unspoken – while traveling and speaking with those people lives on in the countries and cities he visited.

I don't want to suggest that William Rodriguez is anti-Semitic or a Holocaust denier. Comments like Bollyn's above, claiming that Rodriguez has inside information about Israeli Mossad involvement in 9/11, should be taken with a whole box of salt. I do submit that Rodriguez's desire to make extreme, unsubstantiated claims about the U.S. government will continue to put him in the company of other irrational extremists. Any positive message he has to offer will be tainted if he associates with such miserable, hate-filled characters. The invitation to speak in Iran, which recently held a government-sponsored conference to question the Holocaust, featuring a "[roll call of the world's most infamous Holocaust deniers](#)," should be a harsh wakeup call for Rodriguez.

*A book about Rodriguez to be published by First Amendment Books, a subsidiary of the neo-fascist American Free Press, never materialized. [Source](#)

Rodriguez did allow an article of his to be published by FAB in "Debunking 9-11." His work appears beside that of four Holocaust deniers. [Source](#)

[Next: Rodriguez says he's not a conspiracy theorist](#)

Not a Conspiracy Theorist? Then Who Is?

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"I was there. I don't speculate." –William Rodriguez

"It's not a conspiracy, it's that (the government isn't) answering questions," he said. "We need to stand up for this and question the original story." [Source](#)

During a radio interview Rodriguez says, "I agree that there are many conspiracy theories, but in my case, I was an eyewitness. I was there." But then he immediately says, **"Criminal minds within our own government were involved in this pre-planned process."** [Source](#)

"I won't speculate because I'm not a theorist." [Source](#)

"The 9/11 attacks are just an illusion. It never happened in the way they say. It's all manufactured to give the impression that it happened like that."

Mr Rodriguez, a native of Puerto Rico, swears his ordeal began before the first plane hit the Twin Towers. He claims that the White House failed to act, and **accuses the government of being involved in "sponsored terrorism" in a bid to find a motive to invade Iraq.** [Source](#) (02 December, 2006)

Host: "Do you think the people who crashed the planes were genuine terrorists, then?"

WR: "I don't, because, uh, you know, it's, it's, well, what I'm saying is it's not that they were genuine terrorists or not. **I'm saying that I believe these people were handled by our own intelligence to do this thing.**" [Source](#)

Radio host Alex Jones: "When did you start understanding the official story was a fraud? Day one?"

WR: "Well, I didn't know day one, I'll be honest with you. Because, Alex, at the beginning I (inaudible) of the news. **Probably days or weeks**, because I came out with the story and I testified for the media, for the national media, on that same day of what I experienced. And I started to realize that my story was continuously being edited, that the whole information that I was giving wasn't coming out correctly." [Source](#)

Besides what Rodriguez calls a **massive government cover-up**, the stories of all the workers, including the 14 people with him in the sub-level 1 basement office, have never been reported by major news outlets in the U. S., a fact which he said is beyond belief considering the importance of the testimony. [Source](#)

"My allegations were never investigated and the perpetrators never caught. The people they did question - the chiefs of the fire and police departments - weren't even in the building [This is false]. **It was a complete whitewash.**" [Source](#)

Though Rodriguez is sometimes pegged as a conspiracy theorist, he said he is not. He is simply an eyewitness with concerns, and wants to know what really happened that day.

"A lot of people don't believe me. They don't believe in conspiracy theories. Neither do I," Rodriguez explains. "But what I say to them is I was an eyewitness. I was there. **I don't speculate**, I tell people what happened because I experienced it. There are so many stupid theories that we don't agree with but that doesn't change the fact **I think the official story is a lie.**" (February, 2007) [Source](#)

"I knew Jose very well since we worked for the same company," said Rodriguez in a telephone conversation from his New Jersey apartment. "At the time, I taped his statements, I was more concerned about getting people needed assistance and, anyway, back then I really thought the government was seriously investigating the WTC attacks. "But since then I have learned otherwise. **I realize now they are covering-up the real truth** and that's why I want to release Jose's statement. What really upsets me and, you can take this message to the White House, is that people like Jose and many others like him who experienced what happened in the basement of the north tower were simply ignored and never interviewed by the 9/11 Commission. [Source](#)

"I was a magician for thirty years ... It is very easy to do misdirection, to make you look into one place while you're doing the magic with the other hand." Inferring that in plain sight, the planes struck; out of sight, bombs exploded, **"It's just a big magic trick,"** Rodriguez concludes. "It's an illusion." [Source](#)

There's reality, and there's illusion," says William Rodriguez. "When illusion becomes reality, that's a problem; **9/11 is a giant illusion.** [Source](#)

"I was trained to investigate claims of the paranormal by one of the best magicians around (retired) and one of the leading investigators of phenomena. Mr. James Randi, little did I know that after 9/11 I was going to use those same skills to investigate what happened. Magic is the business of creating illusions and to make believe. **9/11 is nothing more than the David Copperfield's at the White House fooling us and hiding under heir sleeves the other cards.**" [Source](#)

That last irrational statement is an insult to Rodriguez's mentor, the renowned rationalist [James Randi](#), who values

Rodriguez as a friend but does not agree with his claims about 9/11. [Source](#)

Making baseless accusations and ignoring evidence that is staring one in the face are not valid investigative techniques.

[Next: Rodriguez sues the U.S.](#)

Rodriguez vs. Everyone

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In October, 2004, William Rodriguez and his attorney Philip Berg filed a lawsuit suit against *George Herbert Walker Bush, George Walker Bush, John "Jeb" Bush, Neil Mallon Bush, Marvin Bush, Richard Cheney, Donald H. Rumsfeld, Dov Zakheim, Colin Powell, Richard Armitage, Condoleeza Rice, John Ashcroft, Robert S. Mueller III, David Frasca, George J. Tenet, Porter Goss, Norman Y. Mineta, Larry K. Arnold, Tom Ridge, Mark Racicot, The Republican National Committee, Inc., Alan Greenspan, Thomas A. Kean, Jamie S. Gorelick, Phillip D. Zelikow, John F. Lehman, Fred F. Fielding, Karl Rove, Thomas Delay, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Myers, Ralph E. Eberhart, Kenneth R. Feinberg, Halliburton Company, Kellogg Brown & Root Services, The Project For The New American Century, Inc., Election Systems & Software, Diebold Voting Systems, Inc., Walden O'Dell, Sequoia Voting Systems, Inc. Chuck Hagel, Saxby Chambliss, New Bridge Strategies, LLC, Joe M. Allbaugh, James A. Baker III, John Sweeney, Matthew Schlapp, Thomas Pyle, Michael Murphy, Garry Malphrus, Charles Royal, Kevin Smith, The United States Of America, The Federal Emergency Management Agency, and "DOE #1 Through DOE #100."* [Really](#).

The 237-page complaint accused the defendants of involvement in a massive conspiracy involving carrying out the 9/11 attacks and subsequent covering up their involvement, as a pretext for invading Iraq. It doesn't explain why those defendants didn't think of using Iraqis as their 9/11 patsies.

When I ran into Rodriguez on September 9, 2006, at Ground Zero, we had a pleasant talk. It wasn't the time or the place for debate. I did ask some probing questions. For instance, I asked what he thought about the 9/11 "truthers" who claimed that the FDNY was "in on" the "inside job." I told him that some of the people he was associating with there, on that day, made such accusations.

"That's ridiculous," Rodriguez said. "The firemen are heroes."

I wanted to remind him that his lawsuit directly accused the FDNY of destroying the 47-story WTC building 7:

WTC Building 7 was deliberately "pulled" (demolished) by agreement between the FDNY and Larry Silverstein shortly after 5:00 P.M. on 9-11, as he himself admitted on public television" (Rodriguez suit, page 9)

I didn't pursue that, because Rodriguez said he was dropping his lawyer, Philip Berg, and because he said he was having an emotional day after hearing the 9/11 recordings of the Port Authority maintenance staff for the first time the night before.

When I asked him about the reports of people smelling kerosene (Jet-A fuel is basically kerosene) in the basement levels just after the fireball erupted there, he said he also smelled the kerosene.

The Rodriguez complaint is an epic compendium of crackpot 9/11 theories. I have no doubt that Rodriguez had little to do with preparing it. His main "evidence" of an "inside job," that an explosion occurred in the basement prior to the flight 11's impact, is not included in the complaint. What is included is a claim that seismic data show evidence of explosions at the start of the building collapses:

106. Jet fuel fires as the effective cause of the Twin Towers' collapses are discredited also by seismic evidence. The Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in Palisades, New York (in Rockland County, roughly 21 miles or 34 km north of the WTC) recorded seismographs on 9-11 that show seismic events at the *beginning of the collapse* of each of the Twin Towers. (p. 49)

Again, the simple refutation from the experts:

"There is no scientific basis for the conclusion that explosions brought down the towers. That representation of our work is categorically incorrect and not in context."

—Arthur Lerner-Lam, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory

Rodriguez put his name to the lawsuit in 2004 and did so again in 2006 (the court dismissed the suit in July, 2006). He even had a laugh about it in his speech at the American Scholars 9/11 Conference in June, 2006. After describing how he received a north tower master key through legal arbitration, after suing the Port Authority when he fell down stairs and couldn't get help because of locked doors, he joked, "I guess that's when I got this experience of suing and doing all this! (laughs)" [Source](#)

Asked why he decided to bring this controversial lawsuit, Rodriguez explains that, having survived the World Trade Center disaster when so many did not, he feels he must learn the truth of what happened on that day. "If what the government has told us about 9-11 is a lie," he says, "somebody has to take action to reveal the truth. Since that plane hit the North Tower on 9-11, like it or not my life's meaning has become to reduce the number of victims, and the amount of suffering from those attacks. If suing President Bush is what I have to do to accomplish that, so be it." —Philip J. Berg [press release](#), Oct. 22, 2004

Rodriguez doesn't explain how a frivolous lawsuit against the Bush administration will "reduce the number of victims."

Remember Rodriguez's claim that he isn't a conspiracy theorist? From pages 10-11 of the lawsuit:

Plaintiff will not be equivocal. His complaint is not based on allegations of the defendants' negligence, nonfeasance, errors in judgment, poor management of various branches of the government bureaucracy, or intelligence failures (e.g., failing to resolve "turf battles" among security agencies such as the CIA and the FBI, or failing to "connect up the dots" of supposedly sketchy information that threatened possible attacks on American soil). Although all of the foregoing may have occurred, **plaintiff is accusing the defendants of foreknowledge of, and (in the case of most of the defendants) approval and sponsorship of the 9-11 attacks, kidnapping, arson, murder, treason against the United States, conspiracy to commit the foregoing and multiple other crimes (many of which are enumerated "predicate acts" under the RICO statute), aiding and abetting such crimes, and/or being accessories after the fact to the same.**

A few days ago this subject came up on the internet [forum](#) of the James Randi Educational Foundation, where I post frequently. Rodriguez was asked if he believed all the things that were claimed in the lawsuit. This is his response:

"You are right, I was very surprised and removed myself from the lawsuit when I read the whole case, it was full of speculation and I did fire Phil Berg.
I did not agree with a lot of things that [forum member] Enigma rightly says, were put in there by Berg and a group of volunteers from all over that after I removed myself, wrote to me constantly and even appeared on some of my presentations to make me change my mind and return to the lawsuit.
Last I heard from PB was that he was trying to get a First Responder to become part of the lawsuit and re-file. Funny thing is that I am very involved with them.....

Here is a link from last year: <http://www.911blogger.com/node/2811>

It says: 'William Rodriguez wants everyone to know that he is longer associated with Phil Berg's RICO lawsuit.

Phil Berg's website here: <http://www.911forthetruth.com/>

The site is still seeking donations, but Mr. Rodriguez does not have access to the funds, nor does he know how they are used. Just passing this message along from Rodriguez.'

Up to today, the site is still up. i sent many emails to Mr. Berg to remove me from it and to bring the site down. He hasn't. Maybe he is still taking donations? Ellen Mariani was also another dissatisfied "customer". I understand many things attributed to me, when I took steps to rectify, was not documented widely. People like Greg Zsymansky from AFP-wrote exaggerated items, so Christopher Bollyn, ther were both fired from AFP. Bye for the next week." [Source](#)

Rodriguez claimed that he removed himself from the lawsuit when he read the whole case. The suit was filed in October, 2004. Rodriguez's 9/11Blogger notice appeared nearly two years later, in September, 2006. As attorney "LashL" points out on the JREF forums,

"In early 2006, Rodriguez swore an affidavit in support of his resistance to the government's motion to dismiss his action in NY, in which he reiterated his belief in the numerous conspiracy theories that formed the basis of his lawsuit.

Rodriguez did not distance himself from Berg, even according to the link Rodriguez sent to Enigma, until **after** the lawsuit was dismissed by the NY court. The defendants' motion to dismiss was granted in NY on June 26, 2006, dismissing his claims against The United States of America, Department of Homeland Security and FEMA, and Rodriguez had until July 7, 2006 to show cause why his lawsuit should not be dismissed as against all of the other defendants as well. He did not do so and an order dismissing his claim against all defendants was issued on July 17, 2006."

In the link provided, Rodriguez posted - in September 2006 - that his lawsuit had not been dismissed at all:

Thanks for your comments. I will explain my reasons in the future, but will tell you that **the case was not dismissed**, instead, I stop my involvement with Mr. Berg and ordered my removal from "his" lawsuit. I will have a new lawsuit with a team of highly recognized lawyers. Just working the details.
My reasons were more personal and lack of trust of the way things were going. I am very busy with all my outreach out there to get the truth out and expect the same from the people that uses my name to gain attention.

William Rodriguez
Last Survivor of the North Tower

(Note his false claim to have been the north tower's last survivor, examined in the next section.)

"LashL" at the JREF forum:

"That is not true. As noted above, his claims were dismissed on June 26, 2006, as against the only defendants whom he had served with his lawsuit, and on July 17, 2006 his claims were dismissed as against all remaining defendants."[Source](#)

So, not only did Rodriguez *not* renounce the bizarre claims in the 2004 lawsuit, including the claim that the firefighters were involved in the conspiracy, he *reaffirmed* them in 2006. Does he really want us to believe that he didn't read his lawsuit against the United States of America until after it was dismissed by the court? Rodriguez stated that his reasons for dropping Berg were both personal and due to the lack of progress in the suit (the court dismissing the suit was probably a big clue that it wasn't going well), and that he would continue a lawsuit with new lawyers.

Note also Rodriguez's criticism of two writers for the anti-Semitic *American Free Press*, including his would-be

biographer Greg Szymanski. I hope that Rodriguez has learned from his association with these disreputable people.

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Last survivor pulled from the rubble? Saved hundreds of lives?

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Last survivor pulled from the rubble?

"Not only was I there, but I'm actually the last survivor from the north tower that was pulled from the rubble." [Source](#)

"Hi, I'm William Rodriguez. I'm not with the FDNY. Actually I'm the last survivor pulled from the rubble." [Source](#)

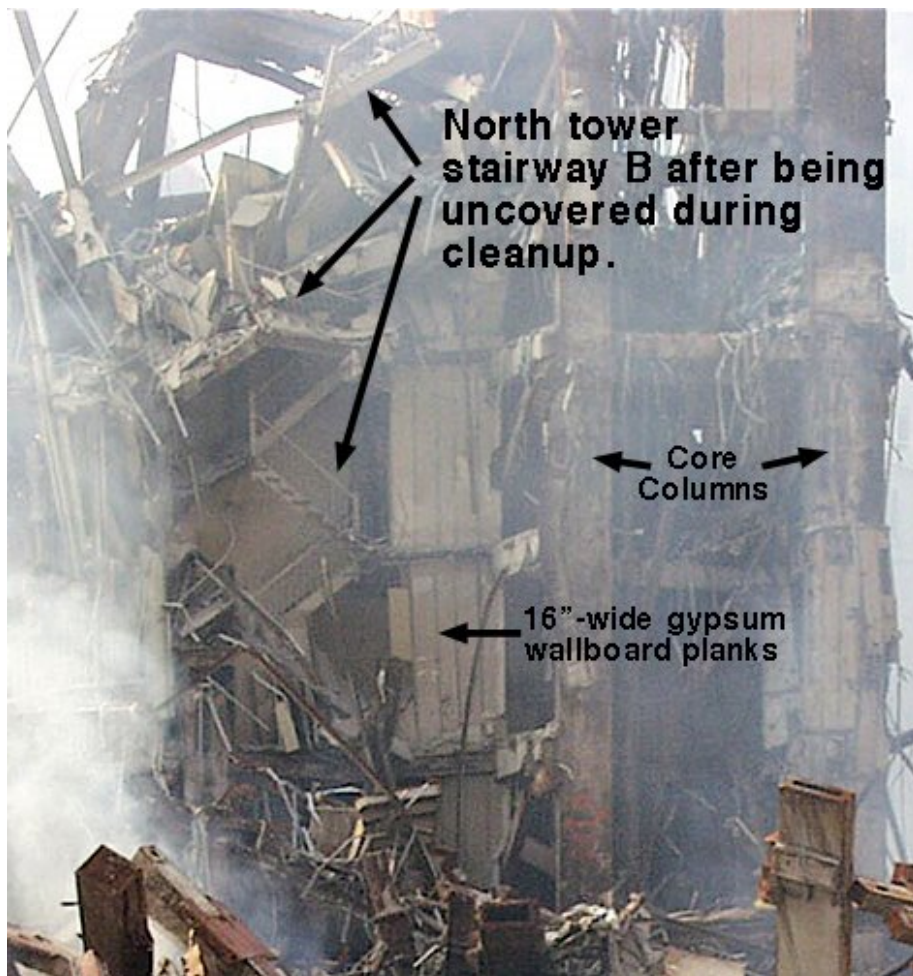
These statements are not true. Rodriguez's story needs no embellishment. He was likely the last person to leave the north tower before it collapsed. He was pulled from the rubble approximately two hours later. He was interviewed live on CNN at 1:30 that afternoon.

Port Authority Police officers [Will Jimeno](#) and John McLoughlin, who were the subjects of the Oliver Stone film "World Trade Center," became trapped by a collapse in the concourse between the towers after flight 175 hit the south tower. They survived that collapse and the collapse of both towers, and were rescued on the morning of September 12.

Sixteen people who were inside the north tower stairway B survived the collapse. Port Authority engineer Pasquale Buzzelli was on the 22nd floor when he was knocked unconscious by the collapse. He woke up a couple of hours later, astonishingly on top of the debris pile. Port authority police officer David Lim and twelve firefighters, some of whom had been with Rodriguez as he opened doors upstairs, survived inside stairwell B. They were able to extricate themselves several hours later through the top of the severed stairwell and get help for Josephine Harris, a civilian whom they had been helping down the stairs.

[Genelle Guzman-McMillan](#), the last person to make it out of the wreckage alive, was pulled from the rubble more than a day after Rodriguez escaped.

[More about the north tower stairway B survivors](#)





Above: looking south on West Street. WTC building 6 is at left. Stretching across the street is the collapsed north pedestrian bridge. Rodriguez survived beneath a fire truck near the corner of the bridge and WTC 6. For an overview of the scene, go [here](#).

Saved Hundreds of Lives? Single-handedly rescued fifteen?

From William Rodriguez's [website](#):

"On 9/11, Rodriguez **single-handedly rescued fifteen** (15) persons from the WTC, and as Rodriguez was the only person at the site with the master key to the North Tower stairwells, he bravely led firefighters up the stairwell, unlocking doors as they ascended, thereby aiding in the successful evacuation of unknown hundreds of those who survived."

Also from his [website](#):

The last man out of the North Tower who in the North Tower **saved hundreds of lives**, but the 9/11 Commission and the Major Media hid his revealing testimony from YOU, the American people!

While his actions on 9/11 are deserving of all praise, I am not aware of William Rodriguez single-handedly rescuing anyone, much less hundreds of people. Again, Rodriguez's story needs no embellishment. He helped the badly-burned Felipe David to an ambulance. While doing so, the 14 people who were with him in the basement office also fled to safety through the loading dock area to Vesey Street. It is unlikely that they would have remained in the basement for an hour and forty minutes until the building collapsed. Rodriguez and a co-worker rescued two men from an elevator that was stuck between the B-2 and B-3 levels. On his way up the stairs he found a woman on the 33rd floor who didn't know what to do and sent her down the stairwell with the evacuees (Rodriguez says that she was killed by falling debris outside). Based on his stories, that's perhaps the closest example of him single-handedly saving someone that I can think of.

His master key (which he obtained after filing a lawsuit against the Port Authority when he was injured in a stairwell and couldn't get help for hours) certainly saved some firemen time and energy in making sure the floors were clear. For security reasons, in the tower stairwells only one of every four floors had reentry access to the office areas. Here's what Battalion 11 Chief Richard Picciotto, who was in the same stairwell as Rodriguez, and who survived the north tower collapse there, had to say about that:

"At the same time, my guys were banging on the doors on the way up, hoping there'd be some firemen or other rescue workers on the other side, which we were finding was often the case. We had our tools, and we could have forced the doors no problem, would have taken maybe twenty seconds, but you couldn't force every single door on the way up to the fire floor. Two guys working a Halligan [a crowbar-like tool] could have taken down virtually every door in no time flat, but even no time flat would start to add up." (Richard Picciotto & Daniel Paisner. Last Man Down. New York: Berkeley Books, 2002. p. 57)

Varying claims of lives saved

In possession of one of the few master keys in the building, William led firemen up the stairwells. He was responsible for getting at least a dozen people out of the towers. [Source](#)

Rodriguez, who saved at least 15 lives before being the last man out of the North Tower, reminded the audience how his statements about WTC basement explosions "have been censored by the mainstream media" as well as being completely omitted in the 9/11 Commission's final report. [Source](#) (December, 2005)

Rodriguez held one of five master keys to the WTC—a tool he calls "the key of hope" that enabled him to save 15 people trapped inside the two towers. [Source](#) (April 22, 2007)

William Rodriguez saved dozens of lives on 9/11, but it's the ones he didn't save he thinks about most. [Source](#)

After rescuing an estimated 100 lives that day, the North Tower suddenly began to explode and collapse down upon him. Rodriguez didn't have time to run away from the falling tower, so he threw himself under a nearby firetruck. With very little air, he remained buried under this truck for 2 days until he was rescued. [Source](#)

"I saved hundreds, but I couldn't help my friends," he said Sunday, his eyes filling with tears. [Source](#)

Today, Mr Rodriguez is grateful to be alive, but he said: "I never found my friends. I saved hundreds of people, but the reason I do what I can to get the word out is that I lost 200 friends who have no way of claiming justice." ...It was the start of a day that transformed Mr Rodriguez from a maintenance man to the hero of 9/11. He ran back into the crumbling tower three times, and helped save hundreds of people.
HERO OF 9/11 WON'T STOP SPEAKING OUT AGAINST BUSH [Source](#) - 02 December 2006

Mr. William Rodriguez, a Puerto Rican native-U.S. citizen, worked in the World Trade Center complex as a janitor for 20 years. With what came to be known as the 'Key of Hope,' he saved hundreds of lives on September 11, 2001. [Source](#)

"If I was the last survivor out of the north tower, helped rescue hundreds of people, almost was killed three times and declared a national hero, how could they leave my story out of the book? Are they trying to hide something else I said? They mentioned nothing about the basement explosion, the other 14 people, Felipe David, the burn victim, and many others who all have important stories to tell about what really happened." [Source](#)

"I never found my friends. I saved hundreds of people, but the reason I do what I can to get the word out is that I lost 200 friends who have no way of claiming justice." -William Rodriguez, last man out alive of the WTC. [Source](#)

William Rodriguez to Receive Good Karma Humanitarian Award of 2006 for Saving Hundreds of Lives on September 11

Ventura, CA December 11, 2006 -- William Rodriguez was the last person to exit the North Tower alive on September 11th and now he is being honored with the Good Karma Humanitarian Award of 2006 for his brave rescue efforts and continued advocacy for the victims of that fateful day.

Rodriguez, who worked as a janitor at the Word Trade Center for 20 years has inspired thousands around the globe by telling his personal story of heroism under extreme pressure. Not only did he single-handedly rescue fifteen (15) people from the WTC, but since he was the only person with the master key to the North Tower stairwells he led firefighters up the building, unlocking doors as they ascended, aiding in the successful evacuation of unknown hundreds.

If that wasn't enough, Rodriguez re-entered the Towers three times to help rescue people and survived the North Tower's collapse by diving beneath a fire truck. After receiving medical attention for his injuries, he then spent the rest of the day as a volunteer rescuing the injured and came back the next day to continue his heroic efforts. [Source](#)

[Next: "They wanted my testimony behind closed doors."](#)

Rodriguez and the 9/11 Commission

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"Every other testimony was shown on TV"

Rodriguez was one of the last to testify to the (9/11) Commission and the only witness to speak behind closed doors.

When I ask why, he laughs and says: "Thank you. I have been asking the same question. Every other testimony was shown on TV. Everyone else had a public hearing."[Source](#)

Rodriguez repeats this false claim in many interviews:

I was one of the last persons to testify. But they wanted my testimony behind closed doors (shrugs). Everybody was testifying on national TV. You remember those hearings. [Source](#)

But Mr Rodriguez soon felt his evidence was being covered up, when he became the only person to be interviewed behind closed doors. And his account was omitted from the final report. He claims evidence he collected from scores of other witnesses was overlooked. [Source](#) - 02 December 2006

William was one of the last people to testify to the commission and spoke behind closed doors, unlike other witnesses. His testimony was not included in the final report. [Source](#)

The 9/11 Commission interviewed over 1,200 people. Only 155 of those people appeared before the Commission during its 12 public hearings. Rodriguez could have easily checked this fact. [Source](#)

[List of people appearing at the 9/11 Commission's 12 public hearings](#)

"When the final report came out, what a surprise. My testimony wasn't there, even though I was wined and dined by them. Twenty-two people that I had available, that had similar experiences, firemen, policemen, they were never called."[Source](#)

The interview process was a travesty, he says. They didn't call one of his 20 expert witnesses and his account was edited out of the Commission's report. ... "What really upsets me is that we have all these people coming forward with credible testimony about explosions and we have been completely ignored by the 9/11 Commission and the major media," said Rodriguez. [Source](#)

His story wasn't included in the 9/11 Commission Report, and his information was sealed in the National Archives for 50 years so the public wouldn't learn what happened on 9/11. [Source](#)

Rodriguez looked forward to his appearance at a closed-door hearing of the 9/11 Commission. "Up to that moment, I was thinking that they were going to do the right thing." He states that he started changing his mind as he saw how the commission did its work, and also when the American media edited out his testimonies about hearing bombs in the buildings, whilst the Spanish media did report it un-edited.[Source](#)

No one denies that there were explosions in the building. Their source has been explained by witnesses and by NIST, which was charged with investigating the tower collapses. Those explanations are covered in detail in this paper. Rodriguez refuses to address these rational explanations. Something the conspiracists often forget or ignore: the 9/11 Commission was not responsible for determining the collapse mechanisms of the WTC buildings, and its report does not address that issue.

The Commission interviewed people to gather facts, not to publish every interview in its final report.

The Commission documents are sealed from the public until 2009, not "for 50 years":

The 9/11 Commission, which closed on August 21, 2004, has transferred legal custody of its records to the National Archives. In accordance with the Federal Records Act, the Commission has established a general restriction from public access on these records until 2009. Because the Commission was part of the legislative branch, its records are not subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). However, the Commission's publicly released records are available on the Commission's web site which has been frozen. This web site is in NARA's custody and remains available to the public. [Source](#)

"Just a bunch of bull"

When asked about the 9/11 Commission, he does not hesitate to say "Cover up, total cover up ... Remember the 9/11 Commission was created and they spent more money on the Monica Lewinsky trial than on the investigation of the biggest crime scene in history, it is ridiculous. They didn't do the right thing, it was a whitewash, I believe the commissioners were either tied up or they were lied to by the different intelligence agencies, but up to now five year after I believe that the report is just a bunch of bull." [Source](#)

More uninformed speculation. Perhaps some day Rodriguez will explain what evidence leads him to believe these things, and what he thinks the 9/11 Commission actually got wrong.

"The president said, 'We don't need an investigation. We know who did it.'" [Source](#)

"William spent hours testifying before the 9-11 Commission behind closed doors. His testimony as an eye witness does not appear anywhere in the 576 page report. But after all, Bush told us who did it, so why bother to examine the evidence or talk with the witnesses." [Source](#)

False. The 9/11 Commission was not charged with finding out "who did it." That work had already been done by the FBI, the CIA, and other law enforcement and intelligence agencies, domestic and foreign, in the largest criminal investigation in history. Over 7,000 FBI agents worked on the case. The Commission was empanelled to synthesize the data gathered in those investigations, to determine why the intelligence failures happened, why the attacks were successful, how the emergency response worked or failed, and to make recommendations for preventing future attacks.

These are some of the people and organizations that the conspiracists should speak with, but won't: [A partial list of agencies, organizations, and individuals who were involved in the investigations or who played key roles in the aftermath at the attack scenes.](#)

The White House did oppose the formation of the Commission on the basis that it would be an expensive redundancy. It wasn't, and I'm glad that some family members and survivors pushed hard for it.

"We created the family steering committee. We put a hundred and sixty-seven questions out to the commission. From those, twenty-seven were answered. What happened to the others?" [Source](#)

The Commissioners did not promise to answer all questions posed by family members. That would be impossible. They did say they would use family questions as a roadmap. Keep in mind that not every question posed by a family member is automatically relevant, is based on accurate information, or is even answerable.

The Family Steering Committee posed many questions that are based on pure, unfounded speculation, not on fact. Many of the questions were directed not to the Commission but to people who would be interviewed by the Commission. In addition, many of their questions were addressed by the Commission and by other investigations. Rodriguez says only 27 were answered. According to Mindy Von Aiken and Lori Kleinberg, two members of the Steering Committee, the Commission answered 28 of their questions to their satisfaction and addressed another 68 questions, but not to the satisfaction of the Steering Committee. The 9/11 Commission didn't promise that any group or individual would be happy with every answer. [Source](#)

I am not aware of any member of the Family Steering Committee who agrees with Rodriguez's claims of U.S. government complicity in the attacks or the idea that there were preplanted explosives in the WTC.

"My allegations were never investigated and the perpetrators never caught. The people they did question - the chiefs of the fire and police departments - weren't even in the building. It was a complete whitewash." [Source](#)

Most of the perpetrators who murdered Rodriguez's friends died in the attacks. Others, like mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and accomplice Ramzi Binalshibh, are in U.S. custody. Their trials are due to happen shortly.

While the 9/11 Commission report was not an examination of the cause of the WTC collapses, it was concerned with the emergency response to the attacks. Rodriguez's claim that the Commission didn't interview people who were in the building is false. He may be referring to the public hearings only. Even then, PAPD K-9 officer David Lim, who was with Rodriguez in the north tower on 9/11, testified at the first public Commission hearing.

Further, The 9/11 Commission conducted at least 64 interviews with FDNY personnel, and filed a successful subpoena to gain access to over 500 interviews that had been conducted by the FDNY. [Source](#) The Commission also conducted at least 10 interviews with PAPD personnel.

Further, NIST, whose job it was to investigate the cause of the collapses, spoke with Rodriguez and conducted 140 interviews with FDNY, NYPD, and PAPD personnel:

NIST First Person [face-to-face] Interviews

FDNY Interviews – 100: Command Officers, Company Officers, Firefighters, Rescue Squads, Communications, Fire Marshals, etc.

NYPD Interviews – 25: Command Officers, Special Operations Division Officers, Communications Personnel, and Aviation Unit Officers

Port Authority of New York and New Jersey PANYNJ Interviews - 15: PAPD Command Officers, Police Officers, Building Safety Staff, Communications Personnel

NIST also had access to the over 500 interviews conducted by the FDNY. [Source](#)

[Next: On the record with NIST, agreeing with the official version.](#)

Claims of media suppression

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Radio host Alex Jones: "So regardless of who you talked to, they were editing key parts of them."

WR: "That is correct, and it was a continuous effort from all the medias. I actually interviewed hundreds and hundreds of hours from September 11th 'til today. I mean, I have a whole library of interviews. And, it's incredible, because I have some raw copies, some of the interviews that I actually performed--"

AJ: "Unbelievable!"

WR: "And it's unbelievable--" [*During his explanation of how his story is edited by the media, Rodriguez is interrupted in mid-sentence by an advertisement for Alex Jones' "Martial Law 9/11: Rise of the Police State."*]

As he watched interviews of himself and others who shared his experience, he discovered a common trend: anything about the perceived basement-based first explosion was edited out in American broadcasts. [Source](#)

And to make matters worse the media has ignored their stories even though a foreign television network in 2002 thought it important enough to air their stories unedited in a 9/11 documentary, appearing in Spanish in Colombia.

"The press and the government have known about our stories all along but have been suppressing our words in order to spread lies to the American people about what happened," said Rodriguez. [Source](#)

Host: Do they ever at any point say to you, "Don't talk about the first one..."

WR: "Yes. When I started asking questions... I was not an expert on media. And when I saw that in the very beginning they took my story unedited, and then within a week everything was totally filtered down, I said, 'hold on. Maybe it's because you have to convey the message within one minute or two. ...But then I realized I was being told not to talk about those things. Not to actually (inaudible) because there was an investigation, they told me. [Source](#)

"Why has the New York Times, NBC and others either manipulated my story or never mentioned it for four years? [Source](#)

"Have you personally threatened in any way as a result of your brave stance on 9/11?"

WR- Yes, many times. Also in a subtle way by many reporters- things like, it is better if you do not talk about this or that because you can be killed, etc.

I think we have a problem here with the controlled media in the United States. Totally controlled. They are not putting out the information. They don't want this information to be available because it will create a lot of national problems. We have seen it. There's a political agenda that we have used since 9/11 for everything. [Source](#)

Now, Felipe David survived. He was in a coma for thirteen weeks. ...His story went all over the world, but in Spanish. You see, our story in Spanish is perfect. 'Oh, put it out there, we'll cover it.' In English, it was totally edited, constantly. [Source](#)

Rodriguez may want to consider the possibility that the Spanish-language stations gave the story more coverage because it involves people who speak Spanish.

A response from an NBC reporter

However, when Doug Pasternak, head of the network's investigative unit in charge of getting the Rodriguez story, was asked why the basement explosion portion of his story never aired along with the entire story, he said like a novice reporter with absolutely no nose for news regarding what many consider to be earth shattering revelations about one of America's top stories:

"It wasn't the focus of our interview and didn't add anything new." [Source](#)

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Offers of political office and favors

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"After being honored as a hero by countless individuals, officials, and media outlets, he was offered a congressional seat and millions of dollars in campaign finance."[Source](#)

"I'm talking to you as a national hero of the United States, recognized by the government as that.

I was prepared by the Republican party to run for office. They sent me to the [Governing Institute](#) [note: the cost of 6 Saturday sessions at the Governing Institute is \$150.] And I felt that I was being (inaudible) one way or the other. I was part of the whole game. And not only the photo opportunities, not only the celebrities trying to use me for fundraisings (as a hero)." [Source](#)

"I was sent to the Governing Institute to train for political office. When I started asking questions, it all went the other way. You see, they wanted me to play ball. ...I don't care about anything else, but I want the truth.

It wasn't long before the Republicans recognised the power of his appeal, not least to the all important Hispanic community which held 30 million votes in its sway. They asked him to run for office, sending him to train at the Governing Institute to learn about politics." [Source](#)

"You see, I've been offered everything. I had a television show on PBS. They offered me movies, books, everything. I would say, 'Oh, forget about it.' It's not money. I was homeless. I raised 122 million dollars. And don't take my word for it. Go on the internet. Do your own research. You'll find it there." [Source](#)

In return for his co-operation in suppressing evidence of Israeli involvement in 9-11 and the explosions, Rodriguez has apparently been given vague promises of financial stability – and even political office – particularly in the event that Hillary Clinton wins the presidency in 2008. "I will be set for life if Hillary wins," he told AFP, which suggests that the powers behind Clinton are directly involved in the cover-up. [Source](#)

The final straw came when he was asked to give a public address on why Iraq should be invaded. "I said no - 9/11 was nothing to do with Iraq. I helped organise the families, and we voted against the President using us for his political motive. That's when the thrust changed, and the invasion suddenly became about weapons of mass destruction."

"At the very beginning when they were fighting to try to get into Iraq, they said because of the connection between Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, because 9/11. And they tried to, they connected with me, to try to get family members to come out publicly, on a national level, to do public service announcements, to call for the war in Iraq. They contact me. They contact me. And when I said, 'No, it doesn't have to do with 9/11.' But you know what? It was insignificant, our position to them. Because they went away and they said, okay, we won't have the families' support, so then we'll go with weapons of mass destruction. [Source](#)

He's even thinking of running as an independent political candidate. [Source](#)

These days, Mr Rodriguez fears for his life - and says his plight is relevant in the wake of the death of Alexander Litvinenko, the ex-KGB spy many believe was poisoned by the Russians. [Source](#) - 02 December 2006

I have no doubt that, before Rodriguez began accusing his government of committing the atrocities of 9/11, he would have been seen as a valuable asset for a political party. But a promise of millions of dollars in campaign financing for a completely inexperienced candidate? I wouldn't believe that without evidence. And the suggestion that the Bush administration settled on a strategy of promoting the Iraq WMD scenario because it was rebuffed by families of 9/11 victims, strikes me as absurd.

And the quote that Rodriguez will be "set for life" if Hillary Clinton wins the presidency in 2008? As I've mentioned, the AFP is not in general a credible source. However, judging from Rodriguez's other extraordinary statements, I wouldn't be surprised if that quote was accurate.

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Rodriguez saw a 9/11 terrorist months earlier?

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"I'm very certain, I'll give it 90%" that Alshehri was casing the towers before the attacks, the WTC ex-porter said.

Janitor tells 9/11 panel of brush with WTC thug
By JAMES GORDON MEEK, DAILY NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON - A hero janitor who helped victims escape from the World Trade Center's north tower before it collapsed told the 9/11 panel that he came across one of the hijackers in the building a few months before the attack.

William Rodriguez, 43, of Jersey City met with the commission for the first time last week.

A 20-year Trade Center employee who swept stairwells, he swears he saw United Airlines Flight 175 hijacker Mohand Alshehri in June 2001 and told an FBI agent in the family center at Ground Zero about it a month after the attacks. He never heard back from the bureau.

Rodriguez said he was working overtime one weekend cleaning rest rooms on the concourse and mezzanine levels when Alshehri approached him.

"I had just finished cleaning the bathroom and this guy asks me, 'Excuse me, how many public bathrooms are in this area?'" Rodriguez told the Daily News.

"Coming from the school of the 1993 [Trade Center] bombing, I found it very strange," Rodriguez said. "I didn't forget about it."

After Al Qaeda's attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, Rodriguez recognized Alshehri's mug in newspapers.

"I'm very certain, I'll give it 90%" that Alshehri was casing the towers before the attacks, the WTC ex-porter said.

It is believed that American Airlines Flight 11 hijacker Mohamed Atta cased New York City targets, including the Diamond District, but Rodriguez may have given the 9/11 panel the first eyewitness testimony about a hijacker inside one of the towers before the terror strike.

Little is known about the Saudi-born Alshehri, 22, or his travels after arriving in Miami on May 28, 2001. Alshehri used the alias Abu Dujana, the name of Islam's mythic Red-Banded Warrior, who fought for the Prophet Muhammed. It's a name other Al Qaeda attackers also have used, including one who claimed responsibility for the train bombings in Madrid on March 11 of this year.

Rodriguez is credited with saving lives on 9/11 and for helping immigrants get 9/11 funds. He kept mum until now because he assumed the FBI was investigating his lead. FBI officials say they have never heard of Rodriguez but do not discount his story.

The revelation, if true, comes as the panel meets this week to scrutinize - again - the military's Sept. 11 response. FBI agents and CIA officials also will testify about the post-attack probe of the plot.
(Originally published on June 15, 2004)

Could Alshehri have been in New York in June, 2001? It's possible. He was in the U.S. at the time. Would Rodriguez have remembered his face months later, after a brief encounter, amongst the thousands of people of all ethnicities and nationalities that he saw in the Trade Center, well enough to make a positive identification? That seems highly unlikely.

Did Rodriguez report this man's "strange" behavior, which he "didn't forget about," to anyone at the time? Apparently not.

And why would a terrorist ask anyone how many public bathrooms there were in the area when he could simply count them?

Perhaps the man was an architect, an advocate for the disabled, a restroom supplies salesman, or a sufferer of prostate problems. Or perhaps the story is the product of Rodriguez's active imagination. Either way, his story doesn't make sense.

[Next: "My story has not changed"](#)

"From day one I have told the same story."

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"I always talk about explosion, not bombs- since I am not an explosives expert." [Source](#)

False.

"I know there were explosives placed below the trade center. I helped a man to safety who is living proof, living proof the government story is a lie and a cover-up." [Source](#)

"I know there was a massive explosion in the basement, not related to an airplane." [Source](#)

Radio Host: "Do you believe there was a bomb in both buildings?"

WR: **"Definitely.** ...I think that was explosives that was set up on the basement as an accelerator to actually bring the towers down." [Source](#)

"After rescuing several more people from the basement that also witnessed bombs, William proceeded up the stair well to assist people out of the building." [Source](#)

"I disagree 100% with the government story," said Rodriguez. "I met with the 9/11 Commission behind closed doors and they essentially discounted everything I said regarding the use of explosives to bring down the north tower." [Source](#)

"As a survivor of the initial bomb of 1993, it was not only osmosis, I believe exactly what happened years before, so that's why when that explosion happened I put one and one together and say that it's a bomb. Just to clear something up, I'm really not sure what it was, **I am not an expert in explosives but you don't need a degree on science and technology of fire safety to know what a fire looks like**" [Source](#)

A degree in fire safety is also not required to learn that high explosives don't produce kerosene fireballs.

"From day one, I have told the same story, never straying from the truth." [Source](#)

False. We've already seen that Rodriguez, three times, described the explosion coming down the elevator shafts, which he now says cannot have happened.

Following are more examples of how his story has developed, including his account of why, and when, he began to distrust the government. For the most part, I don't place much significance in the variance of timing in Rodriguez's accounts of the noises he heard. As I will illustrate later, I think it is unlikely that Rodriguez heard the impact of AA flight 11 at all: several people who were quite close to the impact floors say they didn't hear it. I think Rodriguez heard the secondary explosions that resulted from the impact. If that is the case, then his story is entirely consistent with the accounts of many other witnesses, above and below where he was. The purpose of this section is to show how his story did not stay the same "from day one."

"Listen, I showed up on CNN, on that day, okay? And if you can get the transcript, because I have been unsuccessful, but luckily I have a copy. And my story now is exactly the same one that I gave on that day." [Source](#)

Pulled from rubble, Rodriguez spoke to CNN "All over the world. And then it was picked by every station, where I'm actually talking about the explosions there." [Source](#)

Here is Rodriguez's first account of the day's events, shortly after he was pulled from the rubble:

CNN BREAKING NEWS Airplanes Hit The World Trade Center Aired Live September 11, 2001 - 13:30 ET

(Aaron) BROWN: Tell me what happened.

RODRIGUEZ: I was in the basement, which is the support floor for the maintenance company, and we hear like a big rumble. Not like an impact, like a rumble, like moving furniture in a massive way. And all of sudden we hear another rumble, and a guy comes running, running into our office, and all of skin was off his body. All of the skin.

[Watch the CNN clip here](#)

No indication there that he thought one of those rumbles was caused by pre-planted explosives and one by the airplane impact.

Rodriguez is quoted on CNN.com on September 12, 2001 (this does not appear to be a paraphrase of his 9/11

interview, as important descriptive words are different):

"We heard a loud rumble, then all of a sudden we heard another rumble like someone moving a whole lot of furniture," Rodriguez said. "And then the elevator opened and a man came into our office and all of his skin was off." [Source](#)

CNN certainly wasn't afraid of what Rodriguez had to say, because they invited him to speak again, live, on September 11, 2002 (with PAPD officer David Lim):

On the subject of your friends, one of them is with you, a relatively new friend I know, William Rodriguez. If Mr. Rodriguez is actually close enough, we've got a mike on him, just tell the story of how -- William, tell the story of how the two of you met.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE (Rodriguez): Well, no, we knew each other for many years. We work at the -- I work at the building. I personally in charge of all the stairs, of all the maintenance of the stairs in the building. And I knew David for probably 15, 16 years.

And at that terrible day when I took people out of the office, one of them totally burned because he was standing in front of the freight elevator and the ball of fire came down the duct of the elevator itself, I put him on the ambulance. And I came back running into the building. And the only person that I found there was Officer David Lim. And the first thing that he told me was, Willie do you have the key. Meaning if I had the master key to the building, which I have and I still have. It's over here. This is the key that opened all the doors on the staircase. It's called a T2 key. And he said let's go.

And we went up, he opened the door on the lobby. We went on the basement, number one. And there when we opened the door, the fire department was there waiting in front of the 50 car elevator, which was already gone, because the airplane, when he came through the building, broke all the cables and practically destroyed the elevator because the elevator went down seven flights of floors. And, he said to the -- to the firemen, follow me, we know the best way to go up and we have the access key. So we started going up the stairs and opening all the doors. [Source](#)

When did Rodriguez suspect that the official story was wrong?

Alex Jones: "When did you start understanding the official story was a fraud? Day one?"

WR: "Well, I didn't know day one, I'll be honest with you. Because, Alex, at the beginning I (inaudible) of the news. **Probably days or weeks**, because I came out with the story and I testified for the media, for the national media, on that same day of what I experienced. And I started to realize that my story was continuously being edited, that the whole information that I was giving wasn't coming out correctly." [Source](#)

Yet in [this 2002 video](#), Rodriguez and Felipe David blame Osama bin Laden. And more than a year after 9/11 he says,

"One of the simple requests that we had (was to) have a family member to represent our interests on the Commission. They wouldn't. They said, 'No, no, no, no.'" **So that's when we started to distrusting the government.**" [Source](#)

And then,

"it is a well known fact that I was believeing the goverment official story early on. **As I asked questions and put things together, the whole thing changed from their side and also from mine.**" [Source](#)

I would be interested to hear how Rodriguez reconciles his claim that from day one he believed there were explosives planted in the basement with his statements that he originally believed the official story. At no time did the official version state that explosives were planted in the towers. And what could Rodriguez possibly mean when he says "the whole thing changed from their side?" I hope he will take the time to think about, and if possible explain, these discrepancies.

How long between the explosion below and the explosion above?

Host: So there was an explosion from below you?

WR: "Correct. And that was, **you know (snaps fingers), a second or two before the impact of the plane.**" [Source](#) (Reminder: Rodriguez had no way of knowing when the plane hit.)

The second explosion came before he could "verbalize" the first. [Source](#)

"A second or two before the plane hit. Definitely. ...When I went to verbalize it, we heard the impact of the plane very far away, coming from the top. [Source](#)

Rodriguez interviewed in Loose Change Second Edition Recut:

"And all of a sudden we heard boom! And I thought it was a generator that blew up in the basement. And I said to myself: Oh my God, I think that's the generator. And I was going to verbalize it, and when I finished saying that in my mind, I hear boom! Right on the top. Pretty far away. So, it was a difference between coming from the basement and coming from the top."

"As I was talking to a supervisor at 8:46 like chitchatting and all of a sudden we hear PAAH very strong BOOM!!! An explosion so hard that it pushed us UPWARDS, UPWARDS!!!...The explosion was so hard that all the walls cracked the false ceiling fell on top of us, the sprinkler system got activated and when I was going to

verbalize it was a generator we hear BOOM! All the way at the top. ... **Seconds after** the first massive explosion below in the basement still rattled the floor, I hear another explosion from way above," said Rodriguez. "Although I was unaware at the time, this was the airplane hitting the tower, it occurred moments after the first explosion." [Source](#)

"When I heard the sound of the explosion, the floor beneath my feet vibrated, the walls started cracking and everything started shaking." said Rodriguez, who was crowded together with fourteen other people in the office including Anthony Saltamachia, supervisor for the American Maintenance Company.

Just **seconds later** there was another explosion way above which made the building oscillate momentarily. This, **he was later told, was a plane hitting the 90th floor**. Upon hearing about the plane, he immediately thought of the people up in the restaurant. Then there were other explosions just above B1 and individuals started heading for the loading dock to escape the explosion's **resulting rampant fire**. When asked later about those first explosions he said: "I would know if an explosion was from the bottom or the top of the building." He heard explosions both before and after the plane hit the tower.

...William asks: "How could a jetliner hit 90 floors above and burn a man's arms and face to a crisp in the basement below within seconds of impact?" [Source](#)

A third explosion:

Rodriguez then felt a third explosion coming from above. "The ground was shaking," he said. "I thought it was an earthquake." [Source](#)

Q: "As best as you can recall, exactly how many seconds elapsed between the time of the explosion you heard in the basement and the first plane impact above?"

A: Rodriguez **"It was about 4 to 6 seconds after."** [Source](#)

"At 8:46 a.m. on Sept. 11, 2001, Rodriguez, who was two levels below ground, said he felt a large explosion that "pushed him upward into the air" **seven seconds before the plane hit the building**." (U. Wis. Speech April 21, 2007) Note: it's possible that the reporter misheard Rodriguez saying "several seconds" [Source](#)

Claims explosion above came AFTER Felipe David entered the office? Did the reporters get this wrong?

"I heard this massive explosion below, on level B-2 or 3. I saw this guy come up the stairs. The skin on his arms was peeled away . . . hanging. Then I heard another explosion, from above. That was the first plane, hitting the building." [Source](#)(March, 2006)

A man with skin melting from his face, arms and hands came running into the office shortly after, yelling "explosion, explosion!" A plane rammed into the building moments later, recalled Rodriguez, a native of Puerto Rico and United States citizen. [Source](#)

Again, I don't question that Rodriguez heard explosions, and when put in context with other witness accounts (over 220 of which are included in this paper), his story makes perfect sense: except for his belief that bombs were involved, which makes no sense at all.

[Next: Rodriguez's timeline is wrong](#)

Rodriguez's timeline is wrong

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"Once my story came out, some people even joked, they say "Oh, this is Superman. This is a false story because the guy did incredible things on that day." [Source](#)

The purpose of this section is to help put things in context, not to criticize William Rodriguez and others for being caught in the "fog of war." I don't question what Rodriguez did on the morning of 9/11, but it's clear that his chronology of events is far off: by as much as 56 minutes in an event that lasted an hour and 42 minutes. I do find it to be disturbing that he apparently hasn't realized this. The chronological errors may explain why, as he has said, some people find his account implausible. Later in this document I will show how this misunderstanding helped Rodriguez make a glaringly wrong assumption about an event in that morning.

As with the rest of this document, I hope that this section encourages Rodriguez to be more accurate in his storytelling. I also hope it helps him to realize that "I was there" isn't everything when we're talking about a huge, complex, chaotic event. If we want to understand such an event we need to review and cross-reference many witness accounts. Perhaps this section will also be instructive to 9/11 conspiracists who claim that [Norman Mineta's](#) 9/11 timeline of [events](#) at the White House must be correct and the 9/11 Commission's must be wrong.

The time between American flight 11 hitting the north tower and United flight 175 hitting the south tower was less than 16 1/2 minutes.

8:46:40 – Flight 11 hits the north tower.
 9:02:50 (ca.) – Flight 175 hits the south tower.
 9:59 – South tower collapses.
 10:28 – North tower collapses.

When William Rodriguez tells his 9/11 story, he claims to have been on or near the 39th floor of the north tower when the south tower was struck by flight 175 at 9:03, and to have descended from there.

They continued to ascend to the 39th floor. This is as far as William got before he was turned back by the firefighters. As he began his descent he heard the plane hit the south tower. [Source](#)

On the 39th floor, William met with New York Police and Fire Department officials where he witnessed another great, powerful explosion. Despite the other plane hitting the north tower's twin, it was still felt in the World Trade Center 1. [Source](#)

Unlocking doors for the firefighters as he went, William got to the 39th floor before he was turned back by the firefighters. As he began his descent he heard a plane hit the south tower. [Source](#)

For Rodriguez to have been on the 39th floor before the south tower was struck, the following events would have had to take place in 16 minutes (see corresponding numbered items on the graphic below):

1. Flight 11 hits the north tower. Rodriguez is in an office with 14 others in sublevel B1. Felipe David, who had been on the B2 level, comes up the stairs and enters the office, badly burned.
2. Rodriguez, with Felipe David "on his back," makes his way out of the building, through the underground parking garage, and up the ramp to Vesey Street, along with 14 others. He puts David in an ambulance. He learns that an aircraft has hit the north tower, argues with supervisor Saltamacchia about returning to the building, grabs a radio from a security guard, and heads back in.
3. He retraces his route through the parking lot and runs all the way to the south tower. He finds no one at the Operations Command Center in the basement. He tells Jimmy Barron to leave the building.
4. He goes upstairs and sees a Marriott hotel employee manning her station on her first day at work, and "pushes her out" of the building. This is around 700 feet from Vesey Street, where he had put David on the ambulance.
5. He heads back to the north tower basement, where he's told that people are yelling in an elevator shaft. Two men are trapped between the B2 and B3 levels. Water is pouring into the elevator from broken standpipes and sprinklers. Rodriguez and another man get a pipe and pry open the shaft doors. Rodriguez goes to the loading dock, where luckily the electricians have left their longest ladder unchained. He brings the ladder to the shaft, lowers it, climbs down, opens the hatch, and helps the men out.
6. He brings the men out of the building to an ambulance. Perhaps by the same route as before?
7. Rodriguez goes back to the north tower. On the B1 level, he sees firefighters gathered around the fallen #50 freight elevator, which had contained Arturo Griffith and Marlene Cruz. He meets PAPD K9 officer David Lim, who asks if Rodriguez has the building's master key. He does. They go upstairs to the lobby, where firefighters hope to use a

There are several reasons why we know Rodriguez's timeline is off, and why the noise he heard on or near the 39th floor was not flight 175 hitting the south tower at 9:03 but was the south tower collapsing at 9:59.

First, it would be physically impossible to accomplish these things in just over 16 minutes. As a mental exercise I assigned what I thought would be theoretically minimum times for each task, assuming top physical condition for Rodriguez and no pauses in action, and didn't come close to squeezing it all in.

The Radio Transmissions

Second, there are transcripts of Port Authority radio recordings that include conversations with Rodriguez. The first concerns his rescue of Salvatore Giambanco and another man in a basement elevator. Rodriguez was a porter (janitor) for American Building Maintenance (ABM). After the north tower was attacked, an ABM supervisor frantically tried to gather all the porters at a location away from the towers. Rodriguez was working on the rescue in the K elevator car:

Male: I want all ABM porters to meet me at Church and Liberty by Brooks Brothers.

Willy: (inaudible) is injured. I'm inside the building with, uh ... (inaudible). We're helping people stuck inside the elevator (?).

John: Willy, what floor you on, Willy?

Willy: We are in the B1 office now, on the K car.

Male: Willy, get out of the office and come outside on Church Street.

Willy: Copy, as soon as we get these people out. We're getting them out now.

Male: Willy, I want you to go right to Church Street and Liberty! Get to Liberty and Broadway!

Willy: You got it. ([PA transcript](#) 049, WTC Ch. 28 – Radio Channel Y – Operations, Page 10)

The transcript's time code begins when the north tower was attacked. *The above exchange took place at 19:45 on the tape, after the south tower had been hit.*

Later, this exchange occurred:

Male: Go for (inaudible) Rodriguez. Come outside, by Church.

Male: That's a negative. I'm with the Port Authority police, and the fire department are right here, right now. ([PA transcript](#) 049, WTC Ch. 28 – Radio Channel Y – Operations, Page 21)

That exchange, the last on which Rodriguez appears in the transcripts, took place approximately 44 minutes from the start of tape, at about 9:30 am. Rodriguez said that he had turned off his radio at the 27th floor, on the way up, after refusing a supervisor's request to exit the building. These radio transmissions show that Rodriguez could not have been near the 39th floor when the south tower was hit at 9:03.

Then there is the time to descend. Rodriguez's chronology would have him ascending 42 stories (starting from B1 and doing 25-27 twice) against heavy traffic, opening doors and accomplishing other tasks, in only about 5 minutes. Then the descent would have taken about an hour and twenty-four minutes, despite the fact that he ran part of the way down from the 39th floor. From his June, 2006 "American Scholars" speech:

"I ran down to the 27th floor. I scream to the firemen, I have orders to get this guy (Ed Beyea) out right now!" (They proceeded to descend immediately.)

The Firefighters on the B Stairway

Next, there is the known location of the the fire company with which Rodriguez started up the stairs.

Firemen from New York City Unit Six arrived. Each fireman, in addition to protective clothing, had about 70 pounds of equipment. * William, who now had the only key, led the firemen up stairwell B. Firemen were going up as victims were coming down. [Source](#)

There are two FDNY "unit sixes," which operate from different firehouses. Engine 6 was on the scene at about 8:50 and its members proceeded up the north tower's B staircase a few minutes after that. They stopped to rest at the 17th and 31st floors, and made it to about the 37th floor when the south tower collapsed at 9:59. William Green, the only 9/11 survivor of Engine 6:

We were one of the first units on the scene...It was a few moments while the officers figured out what tactics we would use (attack stair, evacuation stair). The rest of us were readying ourselves for fire duty. Buttoning up our turnout coats, checking the straps on our masks, turning our air cylinders on. We started to realize we would have to walk this one. The elevators weren't going to be usable....The members followed the Lieutenant to the "B" staircase, which was located in the core of the building, pretty much in the center. The elevator system was destroyed. Hoistway doors were ajar. Some were missing completely. I saw an elevator car in the shaft, twisted. We advanced to the stairway. There was a lot of rubble in the corridor in front of the elevators. I

remembered I looked up at the ceiling to see if it was charred and had fallen down. The ceiling in the lobby was maybe 3 stories high. The ceiling looked intact. We had to climb over and around this pile of rubble, which may have been 3 feet high in the middle. I thought maybe the floor had been blown upwards from below. Later I was to find out that the rubble we climbed over was burnt bodies. We started up the stairs of the north tower with our hose lines and tools. Many people were coming down the stairs while we were going up. The stairway was so congested. We were telling the people to stay to the right. One long line of people trying to get down the stairs. Water was flowing down the steps like a rapid river. When we reached approximately the 10th floor the water stopped. *About the 14th floor I heard a handie talkie transmission, someone screamed "a plane, another plane" then a small rumble.* Someone said on the handie talkie that another plane had hit the other tower. *The building shook a little and the lights flickered.* We continued to proceed up the stairs. One file of firemen going up. Many people coming down. Some of the people were wounded. Some burned. Some other people were carrying victims. These terrified people were encouraging us. They were patting us on the back. "The firemen are here," they shouted. [Source](#)

Had Rodriguez been leading the way for Engine 6, it is perhaps conceivable that he, unencumbered, could have wound up 25 flights ahead of them. However, we know that Rodriguez was working on rescues when Engine 6 headed upstairs.

FDNY Ladder 6 arrived on the scene a few minutes later. Its Captain, Jay Jonas, has very specific recollections of being in the north tower lobby when flight 175 hit the north tower (Report from Ground Zero, P. 94). Ladder 6 took a break at the 27th floor and descended from there when the south tower collapsed. It was on this floor that Rodriguez and Lim got water for resting firemen, Rodriguez called his mother, spoke with his supervisor, and continued up alone. Members of Ladder 6, including Captain Jonas, were trapped with David Lim in the B staircase when the north tower collapsed. All survived.

Therefore it seems likely that Rodriguez was with members of Ladder 6 on the ascent.

Tough Going

"So, I went up with the police officer and a group of firemen. As we went up, there was a lot of people coming up, and while we got -- it was very difficult to get up." (CNN interview with William Rodriguez, 9/11/01)

"...I knew David [Lim] for probably 15, 16 years. And at that terrible day when I took people out of the office, one of them totally burned because he was standing in front of the freight elevator and the ball of fire came down the duct of the elevator itself, I put him on the ambulance. And I came back running into the building. And the only person that I found there was Officer David Lim. And the first thing that he told me was, Willie, do you have the key. Meaning if I had the master key to the building, which I have and I still have. It's over here. This is the key that opened all the doors on the staircase. It's called a T2 key. And he said let's go.

And we went up, he opened the door on the lobby. We went on the basement, number one. *And there when we opened the door, the fire department was there waiting in front of the 50 car elevator, which was already gone, because the airplane, when he came through the building, broke all the cables and practically destroyed the elevator because the elevator went down seven flights of floors.* And, he said to the -- to the firemen, follow me, we know the best way to go up and we have the access key. So we started going up the stairs and opening all the doors.

We got to remember that the World Trade Center was a Class A building which had three doors that did not open and one that did open. And we have to go floor by floor and opening all the doors. We were in front of the fire department. *We were at the vanguard of what was happening and David was -- I remember it was so difficult because he has so much equipment on that going up the stair, we were sweating bullets. It was so hard. And then the amount of people that was coming down the stairs were actually bumping against us. And we -- we were having a terrible time.*" ([CNN interview with David Lim and William Rodriguez, 9/11/02](#))

So, "very difficult to get up," "having a terrible time," and having to open doors (and to presumably prop them open or to wait for firemen to enter the floor) on three out of four floors.

Collapse in the 60s?

Next, Rodriguez claims to have been near the 39th floor when he heard a radio announcement of a collapse on the 65th floor.

When I got to the 39th floor, from the opposite staircase...police officer David Lim came up with two firemen. And as we were talking about what was going to be our next move, we hear BOOM! The impact on the other tower. And it was so hard that our building oscillated so much, that we lost, practically, our footing. And all of a sudden we hear "Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! And on the radio, "We lost 65!" Meaning that the 65th floor collapsed..." [Source](#)

As reported by many sources in the north tower, this announcement came after ten o'clock, not after 9:03.

After 10:00: WTC 1 - A firefighter, possibly from Ladder 3, reports over the radio a collapse on a floor in the 60's. It is the highest floor reported as being reached in the building. *NIST NCSTAR 1-8, p. 223*

Firefighter Daniel Sterling: At that point when we were on the 37th floor, that's when the building shook from the other tower going down, so --but we didn't know it was the other tower that was going down. A battalion chief—the battalion chief from Battalion 11 [Richard Picciotto], came from a higher floor. He came down and saw us on the 37th floor and told us that he thought there was a partial collapse of the 65th floor of our building, and that we should drop everything and leave the building. [Source](#)

Firefighter Kevin Murray: There was a report that a third plane had hit the building and then we got another report that the 65th floor in the north tower had collapsed. That's what the rumbling was. We had no idea that

the south tower had gone. [Source](#)

Firefighter Michael Brodbeck: At this point after we made a thorough search, we located together via the stairwell. At that point, unbeknownst to us, the south tower fell. We didn't know that the south tower fell. I didn't have a radio because I had the can (fire extinguisher). But I heard there was a collapse in the north tower between the 68th and 70th floor. When we heard the evacuation, we started our way down. [Source](#)

Firefighter Robert Byrne: I remember later on we went up to -- I don't know if it was still on the 35th floor and that's when we all dove into the staircase because basically the whole tower shook and we heard the noise of something going on. We didn't know what it was. What it was was the south tower collapsing. We didn't know. Finally we got some sort of transmission on the radio saying there was a collapse on the 60th floor. Meanwhile the south tower happened to come down. ...I remember when the building came down I couldn't believe it, because I didn't even know the other one came down yet, because we were never told. We were told it was a collapse above the 60th floor. [Source](#)

Visitor Jeff Benjamin: As we approached the 10th floor, we heard a loud noise. I asked a fireman what it was. As I recall, he said the 65th floor collapsed. Shortly thereafter, a rush of dust came up the stairwell and stopped everyone in their tracks. The firemen on the floor motioned us out of the stairwell and into a hallway on the floor. They advised us they were opening up another stairway from which we could exit the building. [Source](#)

That last description, Benjamin's, is typical of evacuee experiences on the lower floors of the north tower just after the south collapsed. Dust came up the stairwells from the lobby, and evacuees experienced a tense few minutes while firemen cleared the stairs of debris.

It is important to remember that none of the people in the windowless core of the north tower, where Rodriguez was, knew that the south tower had collapsed. Likewise, in recollecting that day's events, many people had trouble accurately assessing the passage of time. FDNY Chief Stephen King, in the north tower lobby:

At some time after that, and I have no concept of time here, I remember hearing something to the effect that the tower is collapsing or coming down. I hear that and I hear a rumble. I remember a terrific rumbling, getting louder. Now I believe – and I did for two days after this – I think that my tower that I'm in, the north tower, is collapsing. This is the south tower collapsing. [Source](#)

It is unknown if there was actually a partial collapse in the 60s of the north tower, or if the radioed reports described debris coming through the windows from the collapse of the south tower, which was mistaken for an internal collapse. As we will see in the next section, we at least know that there wasn't a complete collapse of the 65th floor, because some people on the 64th floor left that floor after 10 am and lived to tell about it.

David Lim's Account

At first glance, the account of another 9/11 hero, PAPD K-9 officer David Lim, seems to support Rodriguez's chronology. Lim's descriptions are less detailed than Rodriguez's, but he does claim to have been on the 44th floor skylobby of the north tower when flight 175 hit the south tower. Following is an excerpt from Lim's email describing the events, which he wrote soon after 9/11:

Dear Friends,

I'm not very articulate, so bear with me.

It was 0845hrs when the first plane struck the North Tower. I locked Sirius in his kennel and proceeded to the Plaza of #1 WTC to assist in evacuation.

I noted a body that had either jumped or was thrown out a higher floor. I had never seen anything like this in my life. While calling in the DOA, another body landed 50 feet from the first. I was advised of multiple aids on the upper floors and proceeded up the "B" staircase.

I stopped on the 27th floor to assist & sat with members of the NYFD to rest before we continued. They were wearing full bunker gear and hauling a lot of equipment.

I called my wife Diane & told her I was alright. I made it to the 44th floor sky lobby and while I directed people to the stairway, I saw the 2nd plane struck the South Tower. I was knocked off my feet by the concussion. [Note: judging by his other accounts, Lim means that he saw the aftermath of flight 175's impact, not the plane itself.]

I quickly gathered the remaining people and firemen and headed back down the stairs. On the way, we encountered some elderly and physically challenged persons. The firemen began dropping their equipment and carrying them down.

On the 21st floor I saw 3 other officers and was advised of the collapse of the South Tower. [Source](#)

I remember stopping on the floors now, from forty-four down, to check the floors to see if there was anybody left behind. There were some people that were, I guess, elderly, or that required assistance, that were just starting to come down now, so I just gathered them. There was no time to wait for anyone. I felt that time was of essence. And I collected them, and with my party, we started going down. [Source](#)

Dave Lim: On the twenty-seventh floor I come across a large man in a wheelchair. He will be difficult to assist, but I call it in on the radio, and proceed up to the forty-fourth floor, where there is a sky lobby, a large, open space where people change elevator banks. I look out of the window and see this huge fireball rushing out of the north side of the south tower. This is the second plane. Suddenly, all the windows on the east side of my sky lobby are blown out by the concussion, and the wave hits me and several people around me, and we are thrown to the ground. We get up and start down the stairs immediately. I go from floor to floor and try to make

a quick search, but I don't stop at any floor where I see firefighters because I know they are searching. [Source](#)

Lim, speaking at the 9/11 Commission's first public hearing:

I proceeded up the stairs giving encouragement & calming the fears of the people coming down. Those that were seriously injured I assigned to healthy personnel, directing them to the triage area. On the 27th floor, I met a man in a wheelchair with a friend. They were waiting for the crowd to clear before attempting a descent. I left them with FDNY personnel & proceeded up the "B" stairwell. This switch of stairwells later proved to be my lifesaving decision. Upon my arrival on the 44th floor, I started evacuating those on the floor towards my stairway. I heard an explosion & as I looked to my left, a fireball blew out the windows, knocking us to the ground. I knew now that we were under attack & proceeded down the stairway with my people. On the way down, we cleared floors of any remaining employees. On or about the 35th floor, I felt the bldg shake & thought that my tower was collapsing. I then heard on my Police radio that #2 World Trade Center had collapsed & we were ordered to evacuate Tower #1. We kept going down & met up with Chief Romito, Capt Mazza & Lieut. Cirri. They were assisted an injured male on the 21st floor. I advised my supervisors of the order to evacuate & we all kept descending the staircase. On the way down, we were losing our lights & could feel the bldg falling apart.

Even if we hadn't known that Lim and Rodriguez had gone up the stairs together, there are several aspects of Lim's account that do not correspond with other accounts and with observed events. Lim indicates that only a few stragglers remained at the 44th floor. However, we know from many evacuee accounts that a great number of people from upper floors were at the 44th floor or above when the south tower was hit. None describe being knocked off their feet by an explosion that blew through the windows and caused the building to shake and sway severely. The north tower did vibrate when the south was hit, and was likely hit with small debris, but the effects were not severe. Firefighter Billy Green, on a lower floor, describes that effect: "The building shook a little and the lights flickered." [Source](#)

At 9:02:59 a.m., five hijackers flew United Airlines Flight 175 with 9 crew and 51 passengers into the east side of the south face of WTC 2. For the most part, there was little awareness of this among the people below the 92nd floor of WTC 1. Almost one-fifth of these had already left the building, and nearly all the 6,300 others were already in the stairwells. NIST NCSTAR 1.2.6 (p. 27)

The impact of flight 175 certainly produced a horrifying, spectacular fireball and a great deal of debris. NIST and FEMA estimate that 15% to 25% of the jet fuel was consumed in the exterior fireballs.



Figure 7-7. An image of WTC 2 recorded from just north of due east is shown. The photograph was taken 7.9 s after the aircraft impact on the tower. The locations of the 80th and 81st floors are identified

The photo above appears to show the north tower being enveloped by the fireball and debris. However, a view from the northeast shows that the bulk of the fire and debris was not directed at the north tower:



Figure 7-5. An image of the towers recorded from the north northeast is shown. The photograph was taken 4.3 s after the aircraft impact on WTC 2. Highlighted areas show two large pieces of aircraft debris that passed through the building and landed in the vicinity of the Church and Murray Streets intersection.

Further, it's important to remember that the fireballs outside the towers consisted of aviation fuel that was burning, not exploding. An explosion happens nearly instantaneously and produces great overpressures: "fuel-air" explosives are potent weapons. The south tower fireballs burned relatively slowly, taking about 9 seconds to disappear. As NIST points out, the south tower fireball actually produced a *low* pressure zone at the east face of the north tower:

The fireballs generated on the north face of WTC 2 following the aircraft impact caused major modifications in the observed fire and smoke behaviors of WTC 1. ...As the fireball continued to grow, it began to entrain a large amount of air that was drawn inward at the base. This, in turn, created a low pressure region at the east face of WTC 1 that appears to have been strong enough to draw large volumes of gas from within the building out through broken windows. NIST NCSTAR 1-5A, p. 152-153

Then there's the time between the south tower impact and its collapse to consider. After being knocked down by the blast, Lim says,

"We get up and start down the stairs immediately. I go from floor to floor and try to make a quick search, but I don't stop at any floor where I see firefighters because I know they are searching." And, "There was no time to wait for anyone. I felt that time was of essence." But he also says that he was at about the 35th floor when the south tower collapsed, which would mean that his descent covered only nine floors in 56 minutes, which hardly seems likely for someone to whom "time was of the essence."

There is also a transcript of a Port Authority radio transmission that appears to be from Lim (after 16:08 from start of tape):

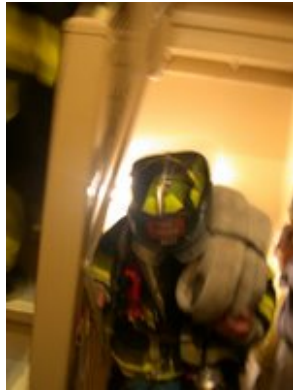
"P-P, K-9 (PAUSE) K-9 to (Inaudible)...the 13th floor, One World Trade. I understand that people are stuck up there, copy?" PA transcript 047 – WTC Radio Channel 26 Radio Channel W - Police

The 9/11 Commission report appears to keep Lim's account in context: "By 9:58, one PAPD officer had reached the 44th-floor sky lobby of the North Tower." [Source](#)

Dave Lim and his partner Sirius, who died in his kennel in the south tower on 9/11



* "Once, out of curiosity, the crew of Ladder 6 dressed a man in the gear each typically carries into a high-rise fire: shirt and slacks; leather boots with steel shanks; bunker pants; a life-saving harness; fire-retardant coat; gloves; hood; leather helmet; a flashlight; radio; air packs; two coils of rope; rescue webbing; a 6-foot hook, and a Halligan, which is like a crowbar with special edges. They put the fully geared firefighter on a scale, and discovered that a member of a New York City ladder company carries 110 pounds of equipment." [Source](#)



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Rodriguez's ascent in the north tower: mysterious smaller explosions?

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"He said there were devices going off all over the building - that he and the firefighters could hear explosions periodically as they climbed." [Source](#)

"As we go up, we hear small explosions going off. Pah! Pah! Different areas. And I said to the firemen, what's that? And they said - one of them - told me, 'I think it's the gas tanks from the kitchen.' Now that did not make sense, because it was a Class A building. All the kitchens were electrical. All the kitchens were electrical. So that did not make sense. What are those explosions coming from?" [Source](#)

"When I was going up I kept hearing more explosions, but there wasn't any fire like there was in the basement." [Source](#)

After hearing numerous small explosions and what he remembers as rapid fire 'pop, pop, pop sounds' in the mid level floors, as well as strong jolts from the jetliner striking the south tower, Rodriguez then recalls being turned back by a Port Authority officer on the 39th floor.... [Source](#)

To me, nothing could be less surprising than to learn that small explosions and popping noises emanated from a skyscraper that was hit by an airliner and had massive fires on several floors and smaller fires throughout the elevator shafts and on floors below the impact areas. I can think of many possible causes of such noises, and I implore William Rodriguez and other conspiracists to at least *try* to consider rational explanations for such phenomena before hopping on board the 9/11 mystery train.

Here's an excerpt from a report about a fire in another skyscraper, the Madrid Windsor building:

"The fire started around 11:30 p.m. Saturday and was still burning out of control several hours later. At least nine upper stories were on fire and **muffled explosions could be heard in the building.**" [Source](#)

What could make the noises that Rodriguez heard? Pockets of fuel igniting. Inflammable liquids and aerosols that were stored in the building igniting. Debris falling down elevator shafts. Windows and marble breaking due to building movement. Structural steel and connections giving way as the building's load is redistributed away from failed and failing elements. Concrete fracturing. Walls cracking. Electrical shorts. Ceiling collapses. Firefighters forcing doors open. These explanations seem plausible to me. Shortly, we will read a quote from Rodriguez about the twisting of the north tower causing damage in the stairwells. He should think about that.

Instead, here's what Rodriguez says about the smoke in the stairwells:

It was an acrid smoke. It was like ammonium stuck into your throat. Spoke to professor (Steven) Jones about it. Spoke to experts who said, you know, 'sounds like ammonium nitrate.' I mean, I'm not an expert on those things. [Source](#)

I'd bet my bottom dollar that William Rodriguez spoke to no experts about this issue. If he had, they likely would have said what dozens of other people said: the acrid smoke came from burning jet fuel, electrical insulation, etc. Ammonium nitrate is used in fuel/fertilizer bombs. I have come across no other descriptions of an ammonia smell in the towers. If Rodriguez is taking Steven E. Jones' suggestion about that, he's making a mistake. When it comes to making sense of 9/11, Jones, a former physics professor at BYU, has proven himself to be either laughably incompetent or an outright fraud. My money is firmly on the latter choice. Examples of Steven Jones' "incompefraud" can be found [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).

One thing to keep in mind is that firefighters searched all the floors that Rodriguez was on and many above. As they were trained to do after a terrorist attack, many of them were wary of the possibility of secondary explosive devices. No evidence of such devices was found on 9/11 or amongst the billions of pounds of debris that was meticulously sorted by NYPD detectives and FBI Evidence Response Teams at Fresh Kills landfill. No sign of explosives or incendiary use was reported by anyone, including the hundreds of ironworkers who became intimately familiar with the steel, nor can any such sign be discerned in any photograph of the ruins.

Another thing to keep in mind (and it's silly that it needs to be said) is that [demolitions charges are LOUD](#) and are used *when a structure is to be brought down, not long before*. When a building is brought down with explosives, it is extensively pre-weakened to minimize the amount of explosives needed. It would take truly staggering amounts of explosives to bring down the towers without pre-weakening them and without lengthy and direct access to bare steel columns for the placement of precision demolition charges. There isn't a single shred of evidence to support the hypothesis that explosives were used in the towers.

Erik O. Ronningen, descending from the 71st floor of the north tower:

"I remember how calm and orderly the descent in the stairwells was... and how smoky... accompanied occasionally with the snapping sounds of tortured pipes and walls stressed beyond endurance." [Source](#)

Here's what two people heard in the south tower after it was struck by United flight 175:

Clyde Ebanks, on the 70th floor: "I think now, these popping sounds were coming out of the elevator shafts because of the fireball that was coming down. The popping sounds, I think, were the elevator doors opening up because of the fireball." (Richard Bernstein. Out of the Blue. New York: Times Books, 2002. p. 223)

Eric Levine, on the 25th floor when flight 175 hits: "Am now holding onto our room's door... clinging to it as if my life depended on it... as the building was still swaying violently... I hear and see more "smaller" explosions.... electricity was cut off...more debris... broken glasses... air gushing in... ceiling was slowly caving in..." [Source](#)

All that's required to gain an understanding of these issues is a mindset that values fact over fantasy.

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Suspicious activity on the 34th floor?

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As Rodriguez worked his way up the north tower, unlocking doors for the firefighters to search, he stopped at the 33rd floor:

"The reason I went to the 33rd floor is that I had a closet inside there, where I have all supplies. Every 16 floors I have a little closet with supplies. And I went to get the dust masks, to give it to the people who were coming out, because of the smoke that was coming in the staircase.

...And as I went in to get those masks I found a lady sitting on the floor, trembling. One lady, no shoes, in the fetal position. And I said, 'What are you doing here? Get out!' And she said, 'I don't know what to do. I don't know where to go.' She was a new employee. ...It should have been mandatory training that anybody who works in the building learns where the exits were.

...This lady didn't know what to do. I stood her up, put her on the stairwell, there were people coming down, and I said, 'Take her out, please.'" [Source](#)

"As I stood there on the 33rd floor, I heard very strange noises on the 34th floor. now, the 34th floor was an empty floor - a floor that did not have any kind of walls, it was a construction floor. It was totally hollowed out there was nothing there . . . not even the elevators stopped there. You had to have a special access key to open the door on the 34th floor" (2006 Los Angeles 911 Conference video)

"I was like," Rodriguez says, "'Oh my God, that's an empty floor, what's going on?'" No construction had been underway and, in fact, a special access key was needed to make an elevator stop at that floor. Fearing "somebody was there with a gun or something," he bypassed the floor. [Source](#)

"As I went back inside the office, the corridor, I heard the strangest thing. Now, on the floor above me, the 34th floor, I heard heavy equipment being moved around. You know the dumpsters, when they scratch the floor, those steel dumpsters? It sounded just like that. It was the first time that I felt fear through the whole ordeal! Because it was an empty floor. I knew for a fact that it was a hollowed-out floor for construction! There was no walls, there was no ceiling, there was no wires, there was nothing there. It was a floor that was emptied out over 8 months before. So there was nobody supposedly to be there. And for me to hear that kind of sound really scared me. So much that I bypassed that floor." [Source](#)

Here, Rodriguez says he heard the noise at the 34th floor stairway door, not while on the 33rd floor. So did it come from above, or was it on the same floor?

"When I was going up I kept hearing more explosions, but there wasn't any fire like there was in the basement. On my up, something very strange happened on the 34th floor, which was a completely vacant floor, gutted for construction. As I was walking by the stairwell door, I heard these very loud noises like somebody moving heavy dumpsters or office furniture. I don't know what it was but it was very strange because I know it was supposed to be a vacant floor." [Source](#)

First, Rodriguez was in one of three stairways in the north tower. Firefighters and other first responders were working their way up the other stairways and entering entering the office floors from other doors.

Richard Picciotto, FDNY Battalion 11 Chief (who was one of those trapped in stairway B after the collapse):

"At the same time, my guys were banging on the doors on the way up, hoping there'd be some firemen or other rescue workers on the other side, which we were finding was often the case. (Picciotto, Richard & Daniel Paisner. Last Man Down. New York: Berkeley Books, 2002. p. 57)

Firefighters who didn't have the benefit of Rodriguez's master key often opened doors by force:

"Colfer and others in the stairwell heard firefighters smashing steel doors floors below them. Doors to each floor were locked and firefighters needed to check each floor. They broke through one door, then smashed open the vending machine to get bottled water, which they handed to people in the stairwell." [Source](#)

"... Marcy Borders...81st floor of the World Trade Center's Tower 1 ...slowly made her way down the stairs in the tower and watched as firefighters tried to find survivors by chopping down metal doors with their axes...." [Source](#)

On the 35th floor, many rescue workers had gathered.

Picciotto: "At the landing for the thirty-fifth floor, though, I noticed the reentry door had been propped open, so I stepped into the corridor area and over by the elevator banks, where there was a good deal of activity. Somehow, this had become a kind of staging area, with maybe three dozen rescue workers waiting to be deployed. Firefighters, mostly. There were a couple of city police officers, and a Port Authority cop or two. Some had reached the higher floors and been sent here for reassignment; some had parked here on the way up, and were waiting for orders." (Last Man Down, p. 61)

A tenant evacuating via a stairway from the 40th floor indicates that there may have been fires or open shafts channeling smoke on the 34th floor:

"There are heavy smokes coming in from the 33-34th floor, we hesitated for a while, wandering if we should keep going down in the smoke, then we moved on, I covered my mouth and nose with a piece of facial tissue, we keep talking to each other, I guess there must be a fire going on at certain floors..." [Source](#)

So, first responders may have had several reasons to be making noise on the 34th floor. Perhaps they moved a construction dumpster in front of an open elevator shaft so that others couldn't fall down it. Perhaps they dragged construction or blast debris aside to check for victims or to clear a stairway entrance. Perhaps they were extinguishing burning debris. These strike me as reasonable possibilities.

Next, the north tower's 34th floor did have office occupants as of 9/11/01. Most notably, the World Trade Center's security chief, John O'Neill, had just moved in. It is known that he left his office soon after the north tower was hit, but I mention this because it's so easy to check that the 34th floor was indeed occupied.

On September 10th, O'Neill called Robert Tucker, a friend and security-company executive, and arranged to get together that evening to talk about security issues at the Trade Center. Tucker met O'Neill in the lobby of the north tower, and the two men rode the elevator up to O'Neill's new office, on the thirty-fourth floor.

...At 8:46 A.M., when American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the north tower, John P. O'Neill, Jr., was on a train to New York, to install some computer equipment and visit his father's new office. From the window of the train he saw smoke coming from the Trade Center. He called his father on his cell phone. "He said he was O.K. He was on his way out to assess the damage," John, Jr., recalled.
(*"The Counter-terrorist"* by Lawrence Wright. *The New Yorker*, June 21, 2002)

O'Neill is in his 34th floor office in the North Tower at 8:46 a.m. when American Airlines Flight 11 crashes into it. Among others, O'Neill calls Valerie James once he is outside the building. He asks her what hit the building and tells her, "Val, it's horrible. There are body parts everywhere." A few seconds later he tells her, "Okay, I'll call you in a little bit." O'Neill also sends a text message to Fran Townsend to report that he is okay.

In the minutes after the attack, O'Neill makes his way to the (north tower) command center that had been set up. There he sees FBI agent Wesley Wong. Wong would tell *Esquire* magazine later, "He was in FBI mode. Then he turned and kind of looked at me and went toward the interior of the complex. From the time John walked away to the time the building collapsed was certainly not more than a half hour or 20 minutes." Wong is the last person to see him alive. (O'Neill was found in the rubble of the south tower.) [Source](#)

He'd made it home from China Club at 2:30 -- typical -- but he was up now, and happy, and ready to take her to an 8:15 meeting she had for Fashion Week before heading to his office on the thirty-fourth floor of the north tower. "He was in a really good mood that day," James says. [Source](#)

Rodriguez was notified of this potential occupancy in an August, 2006 online Q&A session:

Question: "Mr. Rodriguez, you have mentioned that you heard strange movement on the 34th floor. This is the floor where FBI agent John O'Neill was supposedly working. There are also reports of people doing construction on that floor. What made you think that it was a hollowed out empty floor without equipment? Do you have any additional information on what was supposed to be on that floor? can you go into any further detail about what you heard and what you think was happening on that floor? thanks for takeing the time to answer our questions, you're an inspiration to us all."

WR- "because I had lunch many times there. I had a closet-mini office on the 33rd floor and I will go there with my master key not to be bothered by supervisors at my lunch hour. I doubt O'Neill was there since I never saw anybody there. The possibility of course, exists. I was (s)cared for the first time of my ordeal and some instinct told me to bypass that floor. I heard a loud strching noise, heavy equipment." [Source](#)

It is astounding to me that Rodriguez had been publicly promoting this "mystery" without bothering to check it out.

Anecdotal accounts indicate that other occupants may have been on the north tower's 34th floor on 9/11.

I found it! I found it! My immediate outburst after my co-worker called in to ask me to track what floor her friend in New York worked in at building one of the World Trade Center. (He worked on the 34th floor. He was accounted for) [Source](#)

In addition, while it is true that I was not "on site" on 9/11, two of my friends were, one on the 34th floor of the north tower and one on the street watching from the exact spot we are talking about: a block north of the north tower. And when my friend on on the 34th floor left the building, he also ended up just north of the north tower. [Source](#)

There are also some 2001 telephone listings for businesses on the north tower's 34th floor (including the Port Authority's Port Commerce Department, but I haven't checked to see if they were there as of September 11.

Rodriguez: "No construction had been underway"

That's false. About 75 construction workers were on the north tower's 34th floor on 9/11/01.

On Sept. 11, **Craig Trykowski**, a laborer for Henegan Construction Co. in New York City for the past two years, was working with 75 tradespersons and colleagues on interior construction for Lehman Brothers on the 34th floor of the north tower of the World Trade Center. He had been working at the WTC for a little over three months. "The job was going well," he says. It was a few minutes before 9:00 a.m.

"I was trying to clear the area of sheetrock and other stuff and just as I was filling the dumpster, the whole building shook. It swayed back and forth. **We saw debris flying and then there was an explosion," he says.** "I thought at first it was an earthquake."

What Trykowski and the thousands of other people working in the building didn't yet know was that an American Airlines jet, Flight 11, which left from Boston for Los Angeles, had been hijacked, diverted to New York and driven into the tower. It would eventually cause the collapse of the building a little more than two hours later,

"We hit the stairwell; it was a mass panic." They headed down the stairs under seemingly normal conditions but when they got to about the 20th floor, a strong gas smell hit them and by the 17th floor the water pipes had broken and people were tripping on the stairs. "We didn't know what the gas smell was; I told people to put their hands over their mouths," he says. "When we got down was when we saw the smoke. All the glass was blown out in the building."

Firefighters were there to help evacuate and rescue the tenants. "The sad part was that as we finally left, the first group of firemen were going up. They're all gone now," says Trykowski.

Trykowski, along with two electricians and two carpenters, made it safely to the street. "We saw the top of the building as it came tumbling down," he says. "We almost didn't make it out of the building." [Source](#)

Jimmy Loughran, an electrician from Kildress in County Tyrone, was working in the 34th floor of the North Tower when the hijacked plane struck.

Speaking to the Belfast Telegraph newspaper, he described bodies lying all around as he fled the building.

"The whole building began to sway about six or seven feet each way. It was like being rocked around in a boat," he said.

"Everybody froze, we didn't know what had happened. **Then there was a massive explosion, it must have been the fuel from the plane exploding after the initial impact.**

"Once we saw all the debris falling down the outside of the building - a huge shower of glass and metal - we began running to the stairs," said Mr Loughran. [Source](#)

Note that both men say that the explosion came well after the impact and motion of the building. Later I will present many witness accounts that indicate jet fuel igniting long after the aircraft impact.

Finally, Rodriguez notes that when he was in the stairway a bit later, the building was coming apart:

"Chunks of the building were falling down all around them and they could literally hear the building coming down." [Source](#)

Perhaps the noise was the groan of steel due to the shifting of the building. Again, there seem to be several non-spooky, rational explanations that could account for such a noise. It doesn't take a great leap of imagination or effort to envision these possibilities. It simply takes a bit of critical, not mystical, thinking.

[Next: 21 floors of the north tower collapsed when Rodriguez was on the 39th?](#)

21 Floors of the north tower collapsed and no one else noticed?

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More than any other part of his story, this illustrates Rodriguez's misunderstanding of what is physically possible and of what actually happened on 9/11, and the isolation from which he views and recounts his 9/11 experience.

Rodriguez, describing events when he was on the 39th floor of the north tower:

"And all of a sudden we hear "Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! And on the radio, 'We lost 65!' Meaning that the 65th floor collapsed floor by floor by floor, up to the 44th floor, the skylobby. Five flights away." [At 33:55 of this video](#)

In a previous section we saw that the reports of a collapse on the 65th floor, or somewhere in the 60s, occurred not just after flight 175 hit the south tower, but just after the south tower collapsed. Because Rodriguez misunderstands the timing of that morning's events, he does not connect the "boom, boom" noises with the collapse of the south tower.

Rodriguez then recalls being turned back by a Port Authority officer on the 39th floor after learning the floors above had collapsed as far up as the 45th floor. [Source](#)

Instead, Rodriguez would have us believe that twenty-one floors of one of the world's largest office buildings collapsed right above his head, and the momentum of those 21 falling floors was somehow arrested at the 44th floor, and not a window was broken, and he and the first responders weren't blown off their feet or killed by hurricane-force winds and dust and debris, and, in fact, *no one else in the world has ever noticed this incredible event*.

We're talking about 21 *acres* of floor space – 924,000 square feet – almost 86,000 square meters. That's more square footage than in the 38-story Jamieson Place tower that's being built in Calgary:



The fact that Rodriguez believes this nonsense and wants other people to believe it says to me that:

1) Despite his working in the building for nearly 20 years and his subsequent proud assertions of his intimate knowledge of it, and his claim to be involved in some sort of investigation about it, Rodriguez is stunningly ignorant of

the forces that held it up and brought it down; and

2) Like most 9/11 conspiracists, he can't be bothered to read the engineering studies that he proclaims are lies. He isn't interested.

That is deliberate ignorance. Unfortunately, deliberate ignorance is the only way the 9/11 "truthers" can sustain their bizarre fantasies. At a taping of a debate between myself and the creators of the video *Loose Change* in December, 2006 ([view](#) or [purchase](#)), Korey Rowe, its producer, told me that he hadn't read the 9/11 Commission Report because he was too busy. What was he too busy doing? *Making his living by declaring that the 9/11 Commission report is a pack of lies.*

Likewise, for about six months in 2006 I regularly went to Ground Zero on Saturdays to confront a group of particularly ignorant 9/11 deniers called "NY 911 Truth." Their main argument is that the official version of the Twin Towers' collapse is impossible. In those six months, how many people in that group were able to tell me what the official version of the collapse *is*? Exactly zero, although I would ask that question every week. In [this video](#), one of that group's leaders, Luke Rudkowski, defends his ignorance of this subject by protesting, "I'm not a wizard."

Nor am I a wizard. *I just give a damn.*

I think deliberate ignorance is dangerous. The 9/11 "truth" movement is composed of the most deliberately ignorant people that I have ever encountered.

Mr. Rodriguez, [here are some resources](#) that will help you to understand how the towers were constructed, why they collapsed as they did, and why your "21-floor collapse" scenario didn't happen. As long as you remain in the dark about these issues, you will continue to spread misinformation, which is bad behavior from someone who says he's fighting for "the truth."

Although it seems silly, I feel compelled to point out that there were people between the 65th and 44th floors of the north tower after the time Rodriguez thinks the 65th floor collapse announcement was made (9:03 am), as well as after the time that the announcement was *actually* made (ca. 10:00 am).

At about 9:30:

Male C: "We are in the B Staircase, 51st floor, heading down. We have two people with a medical emergency, elderly people, they cannot walk down. ...That's Tower 1, staircase B" PA Transcript, WTC Ch, 22 SHO PD Desk – 2131, 44:05 from start of tape. (P. 36)

"We've got a lot of people coming down from 64." PA transcript 047 – WTC Radio Channel 26 Radio Channel W - Police, 44:30 from start of tape.

9:33: "PO Keane reporting from Stairway-C on the 66th floor, 1 WTC, states that she heard another explosion." [Source](#) (page 6)

Pasquale Buzzelli and Genelle Guzman, two of the "miracle survivors" of stairway B, had been on the 64th floor:

Yes, basically, it was a little after 10:00. We started our descent. We made it down to probably in the mid-40s when we encountered some firemen. They were just exhausted from battling. [Source](#)

Below, Captain Jay Jonas of Ladder 6, who survived the collapse in the B stairwell, describes what he heard and felt when many stories of the building *actually* came down over his head. (It is likely that this portion of the building's core survived because the falling debris was able to flow into the open six-story atrium surrounding it.)

Now, people have tried to get me to describe what it was like while the collapse was happening. It was a montage of different sounds and experiences. The sounds were a combination of sounds. This building collapsed in what's called a pancake fashion. In other words, one floor would hit another floor and would collapse that floor and then collapse the next floor. And every time a floor would hit another floor, it created a loud boom and tremendous vibration.

The entire collapse of this 110-story building took 13 seconds. So it sounded like boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, you know, like that. And every time that happened, it shook the entire building. It shook the whole floor. So every time a floor would hit another floor, we'd be literally bouncing off the floor. We were being thrown around the stairway.

There was also this very loud sound of twisting steel all around our heads. These massive steel beams and girders were just being twisted around our heads just like they were twist ties on a loaf of bread. And a very loud, like a steel screeching sound, almost like a lot of trains coming into a subway station at the same time and all of them hitting their brakes at the same time.

There was tremendous air movement with the building coming down. The air movement was so strong that one of my fireman was standing on the fourth floor. You've got to figure with his gear and everything on, he's well over 200 pounds. He's about 180 pounds and with his gear, you gotta figure he's about 250 pounds. This wind kind of picked him up and threw him down two flights of stairs.

We were getting hit with all kinds of debris. Thank God it was nothing that was going to really hurt us, but after it was all over, it was almost like we kind of got mugged. We were all bruised up and small cuts and things like that.

And then the collapse stopped.

In a day of first experiences for everybody, well here's another one. I can't believe we just survived that. It was

very quick and during the collapse you couldn't help but think that this is it. It's over. This is how it ends. I kept waiting for that big beam to hit or that big piece of concrete to come down and crush us.

It never came. [Source](#)

Jay Jonas



[Next: More Claims by Rodriguez](#)

More Rodriguez Claims

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NORAD "stood down?"

"You're gonna tell me that they couldn't intercept these planes for over an hour and a half? It is impossible!" [Source \(audio\)](#)

An hour and a half? The most notice that NORAD had of any of the hijackings was nine minutes. Did the FAA and NORAD have systems and procedures that were inadequate to handle the 9/11 attacks? Of course. Is there evidence that anyone in those organizations deliberately failed to act on a known threat? Absolutely not. Bottom line: smart and determined Jihadists took advantage of weaknesses in U.S. defenses. They planned extensively, they trained extensively, and they pulled off a spectacular terrorist attack. For specifics on how the attacks were planned and executed, read the [9/11 Commission Report](#).

[Links to accurate information about the FAA and NORAD response on and after 9/11.](#)

Much more at the excellent site 911myths.com http://www.911myths.com/html/stand_down.html

WTC building 7 had small fires?

"Was never hit by a plane. Never had a huge fire. And collapsed exactly the same as the north tower and south tower." [Source \(audio\)](#)

"Why did building No. 7 collapse hours later when there were only small fires burning?" [Source](#)

Mr. Rodriguez should have consulted with two people who were in the north tower's stairway B with him on 9/11, including his friend Dave Lim:

PAPD Sergeant David Lim: "So I attempted to get in through the Barkley Street ramp which is on Barkley (sic) and West Broadway, but I was being held back by the fire department, *because 7 World Trade, which is above the ramp, was now fully engulfed.*" [Source](#)

FDNY Captain Jay Jonas: "We could hear fires crackling. We didn't know it at the time, but No. 7 World Trade Center and No. 5 World Trade Center were immediately adjacent to us and *they were roaring, they were on fire.* Those were the sounds that we were hearing. ...At the same time, No. 5 World Trade Center, No. 6 World Trade Center *and No. 7 World Trade Center were roaring. They were on fire.* And they were right next to us. So we have all that smoke that we're dealing with." [Source](#)

[30 other firefighters who were on the scene and say that the fires in WTC 7 were enormous.](#)

The official collapse explanation is that jet fuel melted the columns?

"They come out with a final report which was that the buildings got hit with 19 Arab hijackers. That it fell down because of the heat of the fires. And because it melted the columns. And that's basically their official story." [Source \(audio\)](#)

"They say it was only jet fuel that brought down the towers. That's a lie and they know it. They know if all the true stories about explosions are revealed to the American people, they will all be exposed as liars." [Source](#)

"They never included my name or a word I said about the basement explosions or what happened on the 34th floor, never considered anything when they finally adopted the government story that only jet fuel brought down the towers." [Source](#)

"And I contacted NIST previously four times without a response. Finally, this week I asked them before they came up with their conclusion that jet fuel brought down the towers, if they ever considered my statements or the statements of any of the other survivors who heard the explosions. They just stared at me with blank faces and didn't have any answers." [Source](#)

If Mr. Rodriguez had bothered to read the engineering studies about the tower collapses, he would know that nowhere do they conclude that jet fuel melted any columns or that the fuel was the sole cause of the collapses. His statements are classic "straw man" arguments, and display complete ignorance of the topic. For a summary of the "official" cause of the collapses, see the NIST FAQ at the top of this page.

No steel frame building ever fell due to fire?

The Twin Towers were the only known steel frame buildings in history claimed to have failed because of fire.

[Source](#)

"No steel-framed building had ever collapsed because of fire." [Source \(audio\)](#)

More typical 9/11 denier nonsense about steel structures and fires. Steel performs poorly in fires: that's why building codes require that the structural steel in office buildings be covered with thermal insulation. Without that protection, steel can fail extremely quickly under normal fire conditions. The towers did not undergo normal fire conditions: they sustained severe structural damage, severe fires on multiple floors simultaneously, and loss of thermal protection.

For much more information about this topic, including the collapse of steel buildings due to fire, please go [here](#) and [here](#).

"The only agency that was allowed to investigate the circumstances of the event was FEMA" [Source](#)

That's an outright lie. Rodriguez himself spoke to leaders of the NIST investigation. NIST produced the 10,000 page engineering study that is the "official" version of the tower collapses. Their investigation into the collapse of WTC 7 is ongoing. Independent engineering investigations into the collapses were done. None support the conspiracist claims in any way. No relevant experts who studied the issues agree with the conspiracy-mongers.

WTC steel was shipped away to hide evidence?

"Also, ask why all the evidence and the steel beams were hauled away by FEMA before anybody could investigate the cause of the collapse? [Source](#)

Question: "Do you have any idea which core columns were destroyed during the initial blast in the basement? I am trying to determine what central columns had been destroyed during the time leading up to the collapse, and which ones were destroyed at the onset of (or during) the collapse itself. Any clues you have that may aid this analysis would be extremely helpful."

Rodriguez answer: "Remember that the steel to prove that, was sold weeks after to Malaysia, china and Korea... to make paper clips. Clear destruction of evidence." [Source](#)

This is yet another common conspiracist canard, promoted by people who can't be bothered to learn about the events they claim to be investigating. As with most 9/11 conspiracist claims, there is absolutely no evidence to support this assertion.

First, FEMA "hauled away" no steel, or anything else, from the WTC site. Rodriguez, as usual, casually spouts a baseless accusation. Second, the steel from the site was removed over a nine-month period, not "in weeks." Third, during September, 2001 some of the steel was removed to recycling centers *as part of the huge rescue and recovery operation, to prevent further damage to surrounding structures, and because no one asked that it be retained for examination*. Who organized and supervised this operation? Ken Burton and Mike Holden of the New York City Department of Design and Construction. Why were Burton and Holden in charge? Because they were the first to set up an office near the site and because they could marshal the heavy equipment necessary for the rescue operation faster than anyone else. They didn't ask to be in charge, but there was no city, state, or national plan in place to respond to a disaster of this type. New York City construction experts became the *de facto* leaders at Ground Zero because they got things done. Structural engineers at the site were initially totally occupied with determining the safety and stability of the "piles," the subgrade levels, the "bathtub," and the surrounding buildings. The first structural engineer to realize that there was no plan in place to preserve steel for examination was Abolhassan Astaneh-El of Berkeley, who to this day remains committed to investigating and understanding the WTC collapses. When he brought this matter to the attention of the city in late September, a plan was immediately put in place to preserve the steel for inspection. In the meantime, the WTC site was a crime scene, with NYPD Crime Scene Units swabbing steel for tissue and hair samples to be sent to the Medical Examiner's office. A second crime scene was established at Fresh Kills landfill, where over 1,000 people, including hundreds of NYPD detectives and FBI agents, sorted and inspected for evidence 1.2 million tons of debris. Virtually everyone involved agreed that the initial FEMA investigation was insufficient, and a much more thorough investigation of the collapses was undertaken by NIST.

Dr W. Gene Corley, head of the building performance assessment team, in his testimony to the House of Representatives (Corley received the 2007 AAES [National Engineering Award](#)):

"There has been some concern expressed by others that the work of the team has been hampered because debris was removed from the site and has subsequently been processed for recycling. This is not the case. The team has had full access to the scrap yards and to the site and has been able to obtain numerous samples. At this point there is no indication that having access to each piece of steel from the World Trade Center would make a significant difference to understanding the performance of the structures". •

[Source](#)

I do think that statement is an exaggeration by Corley. A small percentage of tower steel was recycled before a plan was in place to have engineers examine it. And I have no doubt that the NIST investigators would have liked to have steel from WTC 7 available. Again, at the time that simply wasn't a priority. This would be a different issue entirely if engineers had requested access to the steel and been denied.

For much more information, see [Ground Zero cleanup](#), [Fresh Kills sorting operations](#), [Steel scrap issues](#) and read the books *Nine Months at Ground Zero*, *American Ground*, and *Report from Ground Zero*. This is not a mystery. Information about this issue is extremely easy to find.

Below: Gene Corley and another engineer inspecting WTC steel at a scrap yard; steel from the aircraft impact zones preserved for study; cataloging steel samples; Fresh Kills sorting operations.



"The patriot act totally eliminated 50 years of civil rights."[Source](#)

How?

"I only deal with people with PH'd's. Doctorates in the matter. Serious researchers."
"I have spoken with many Research Institutions"[Source](#)

Then you won't have any trouble quoting their responses to your claims. Please do so, Mr. Rodriguez, and while you're at it perhaps you can explain this comment: **"I don't care what the government says, what scientists say. I saw a man burned terribly from a fire that was caused from an explosion below."** [Source](#)

"When I get to the lobby, what do I see? The elevators for the passengers are open from the bottom like this (indicated open at the bottom). The doors. The aluminum doors. Indication that something powerful came from the bottom."[Source \(video\)](#)

Why is that an indication that something powerful came from the bottom? Why not from the top? Many people were in the lobby when the fireball came through. None describe it coming from below.

"Why would the sprinkler system get activated in the basement when the plane hit on the top? Think about it. Does that make sense? No."[Source \(video\)](#)

There were jet fuel fireballs in the basement. Remember? You said this: "When the explosion happened in the basement there was fire all over, and this guy tried to cover his face... " (Video: William Rodriguez An American Hero. 2005, Snowshoe Films)

It would "Explain a lot" if I were gay?

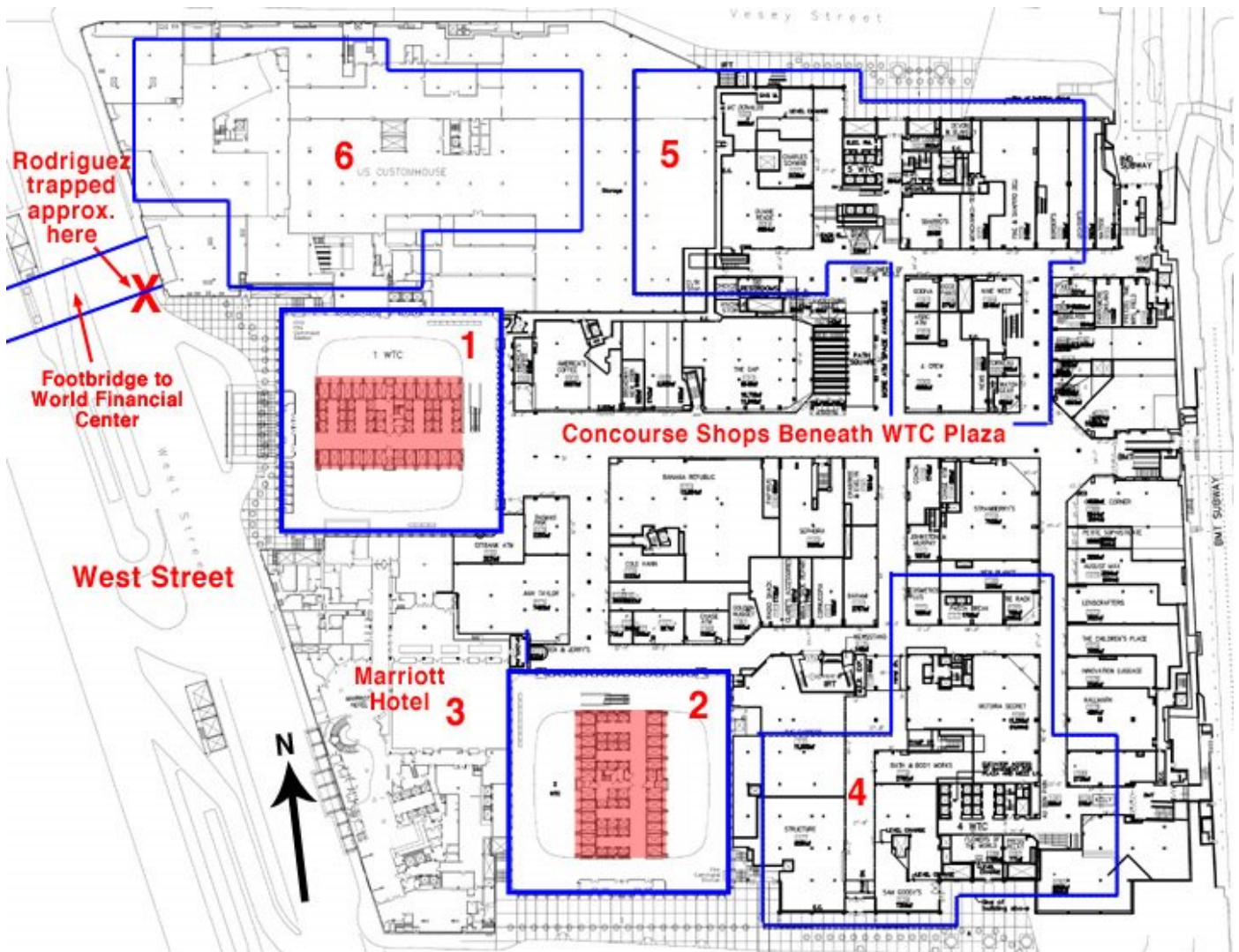
Rodriguez has been posting at the Loose Change Forum, which is to rational thought what [Virgil Starkwell](#) was to the cello. On May 5, Rodriguez wondered if I am gay, and wrote, "anybody have info on that? Not that it is relevant to our debate but it will explain a lot of things if true."

Mr. Rodriguez, what would it explain if I were gay?

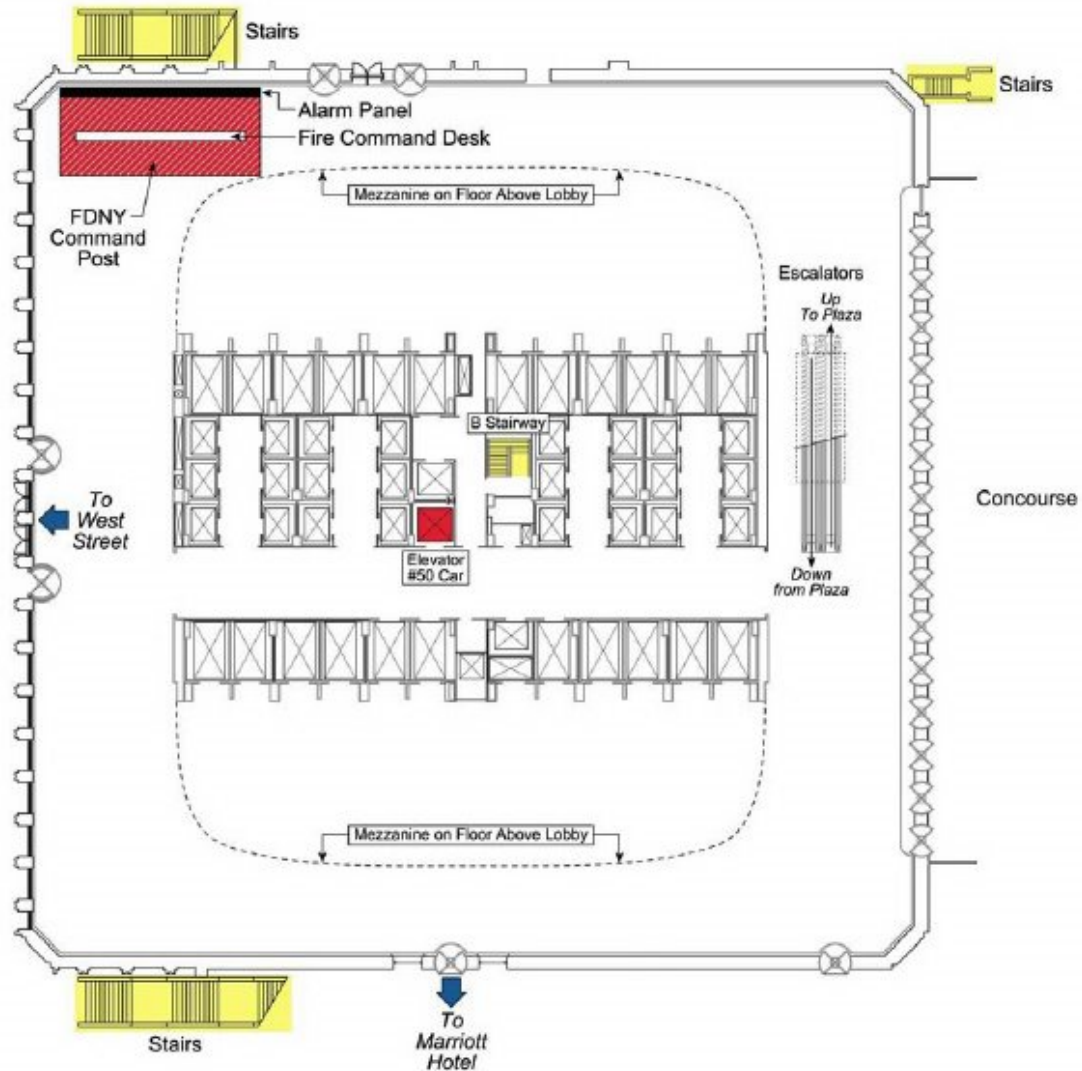
[Next: WTC Site overview, FDNY command posts, Stairways, Location where Rodriguez trapped](#)

WTC Site Overview

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Above: photo taken from World Financial Center building 2 on 9/11. From lower left: north footbridge over West Street, WTC 6, North tower (WTC 1), Marriott Hotel (WTC 3). A portion of WTC 7 is visible at top left. When the north tower collapsed, William Rodriguez dove under a fire truck near the north footbridge, which may have been one of the trucks seen here. Below: crushed footbridge marked with X.



Above: Banks of large express elevators face the north and south walls. Below: Looking from east mezzanine to FDNY command desk. The north pedestrian bridge across West Street is visible through the windows, above the mezzanine.



Figure 5-6. Video image of the FDNY Fire Command Board located in the lobby of WTC 1.

At about 9:30 a.m., the command post was moved across West Street when the north tower was deemed to be unsafe. Many firefighters did not receive the radioed evacuation order. The north tower is at top left of the photo below; the Marriott at top center. In the foreground is the ramp to the loading dock between WFC 2 and 3. Many firefighters escaped into the loading dock when the south tower collapsed. Light-colored smoke can be seen near the top right: the result of flaming debris falling after the impacts.



Below: Building core with elevators at left. Note marble knocked off core wall by overpressure from blast within. The core walls were made of gypsum wallboard. Some firefighters carried as much as 110 lbs (50 kg) of gear.

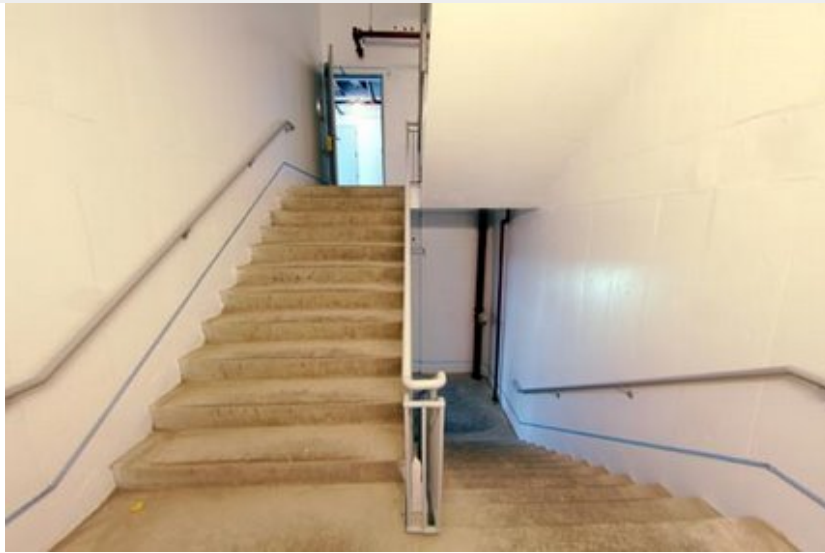


Figure 5-12. Video image showing FDNY firefighters inside the lobby of WTC 1 with protective clothing and extra equipment carried for operations inside the building.

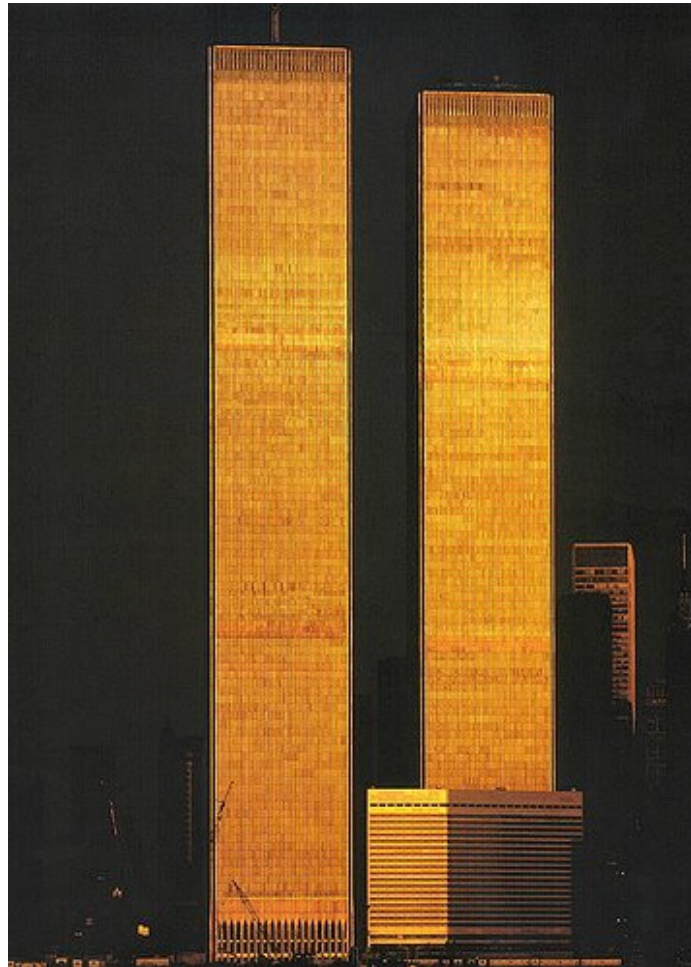
Below: [Mike Kehoe](#) of Engine 28 in the north tower.



Below: in the new (2006) WTC building 7, wider stairways within a thick concrete core.



The towers and Marriott hotel before the construction of the World Financial Center & Battery Park City



Collapse of the north tower. A large section of its core stood for several seconds, then also collapsed. Sixteen people within the building survived the collapse. WTC 7 is at lower right.



[Next: WTC Elevators and Shafts](#)

WTC Elevators and Shafts

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"The World Trade Center had 150 elevators" –William Rodriguez [Source](#)

Actually, each tower had 106 elevators.

The twin towers had 15 miles of elevator shafts. [Source](#)

Elevator plans for both towers were identical, although their service cores were oriented differently. The north tower office floors had 60 feet of open floor space on its north and south sides and 35 feet of open floor space on its east and west sides. The south tower's 60-foot open floors were on its east and west sides.

Elevators were the primary mode of routine ingress and egress from the towers for tens of thousands of people daily. In order to minimize the total floor space needed for elevators, each tower was divided vertically into three zones by skylobbies, which served to distribute passengers among express and local elevators. In this way, the local elevators within a zone were placed on top of one another within a common shaft. Local elevators serving the lower portion of a zone were terminated to return to the space occupied by those shafts to leasable tenant space. People transferred from express elevators to local elevators at the skylobbies which were located on the 44th and 78th floors in both towers. Each tower had 99 passenger and 7 freight elevators, all located within the core of the building. <http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-1.pdf> (PDF pg.39)

There were 99 passenger elevators in each tower, arranged in three vertical zones to move occupants in stages to skylobbies on the 44th and 78th floors. These were arranged as express (generally larger cars that moved at higher speeds) and local elevators in an innovative system first introduced in WTC 1 and WTC 2. There were 8 express elevators from the concourse to the 44th floor and 10 express elevators from the concourse to the 78th floor as well as 24 local elevators per zone, which served groups of floors in those zones. There were seven freight elevators, only one of which served all floors. All elevators had been upgraded to incorporate firefighter emergency operation per American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) A17.1 and Local Law 5 (1973). <http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-1.pdf> (PDF pg. 50)

There were two express elevators (#6 and #7) to Windows on the World (and related conference rooms and banquet facilities) in WTC 1 and two to the observation deck in WTC 2. There were five local elevators in each building: three that brought people from the subterranean levels to the lobby, one that ran between floors 106 and 110, and one that ran between floors 43 and 44, serving the cafeteria from the skylobby. All elevators had been upgraded to incorporate firefighter emergency operation requirements.

In addition to the passenger elevators, there were seven freight elevators in each tower; most served a particular zone, while Car 50 served every floor.

* Car #5: B1-5, 6, 9-40, 44

* Car #6: B1-5, 44, 75, 77-107 <http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-7.pdf> (PDF pg. 72)

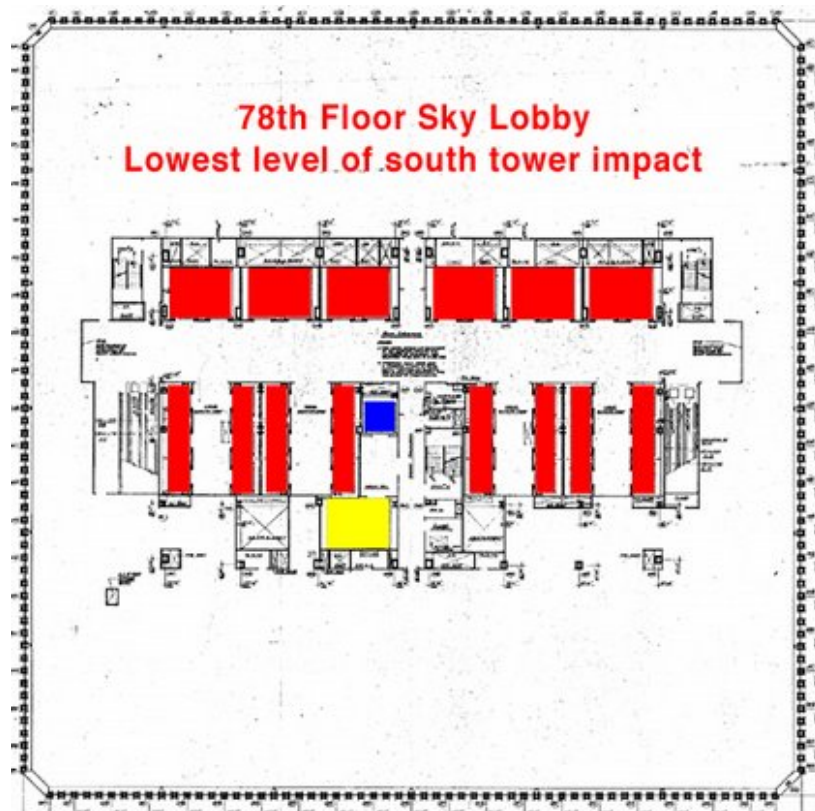
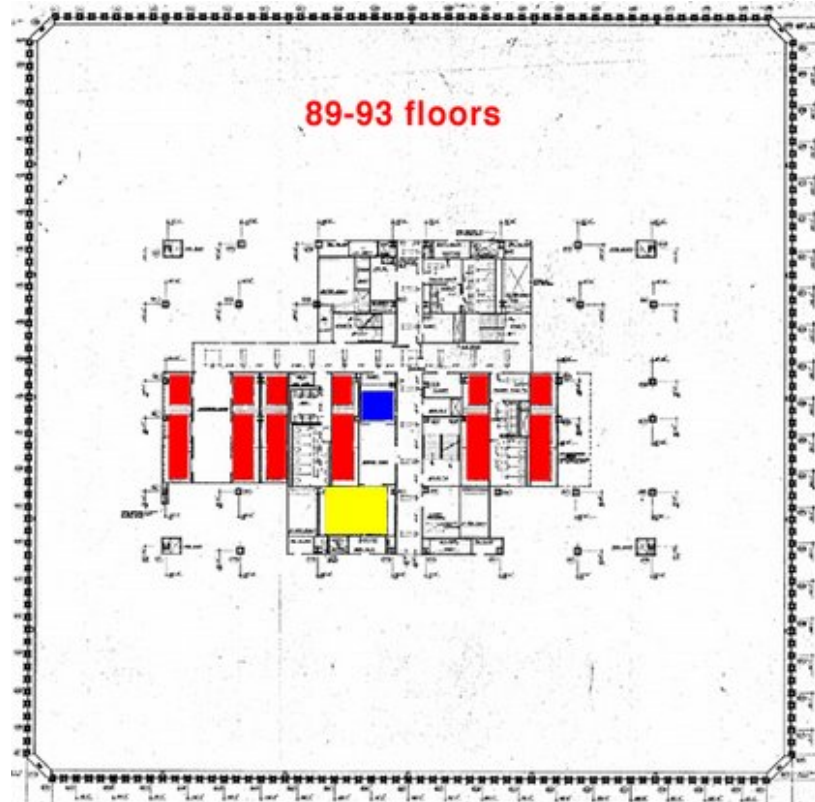
For an elevator's cables to be cut and result in dropping the car to the bottom of the shaft, the cables would need to have been in the aircraft impact debris path, floors 93 through 98 in WTC 1 or floors 78 through 83 in WTC 2. Inspection of the elevator riser diagram and architectural floor plans for WTC 1 shows that the following elevators met these criteria: cars 81 through 86 (Bank B) and 87 through 92 (Bank C), local cars in Zone III; car 50, the freight elevator, and car 6, the Zone III shuttle. ... Cars 6 and 50 could have fallen all the way to the pit in the sub-basement level, and car 50 in WTC 1 was reported to have done so. <http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-7.pdf> (PDF pg. 160)

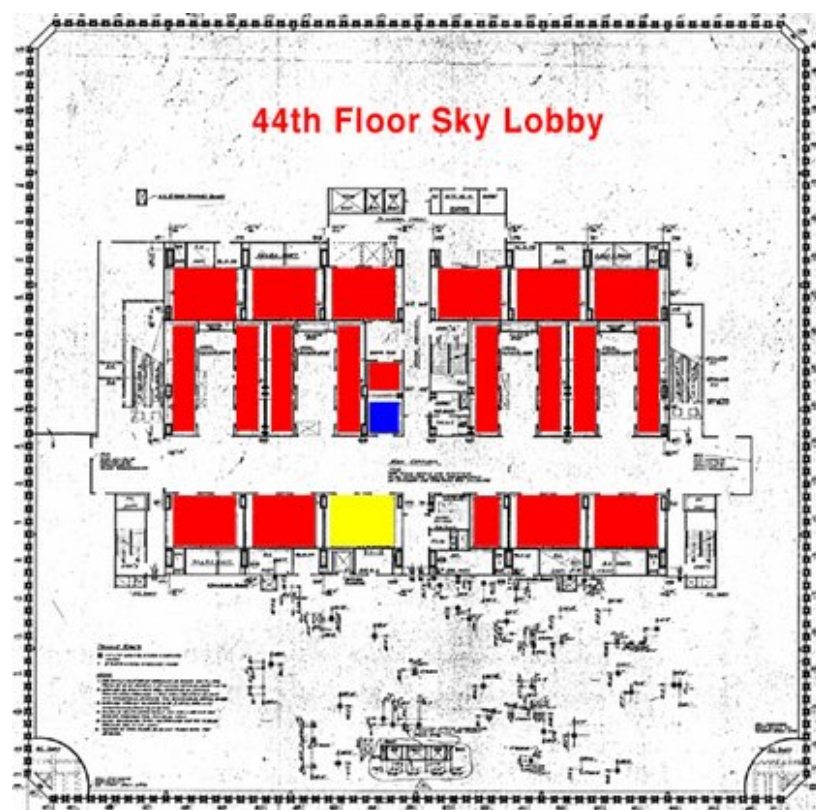
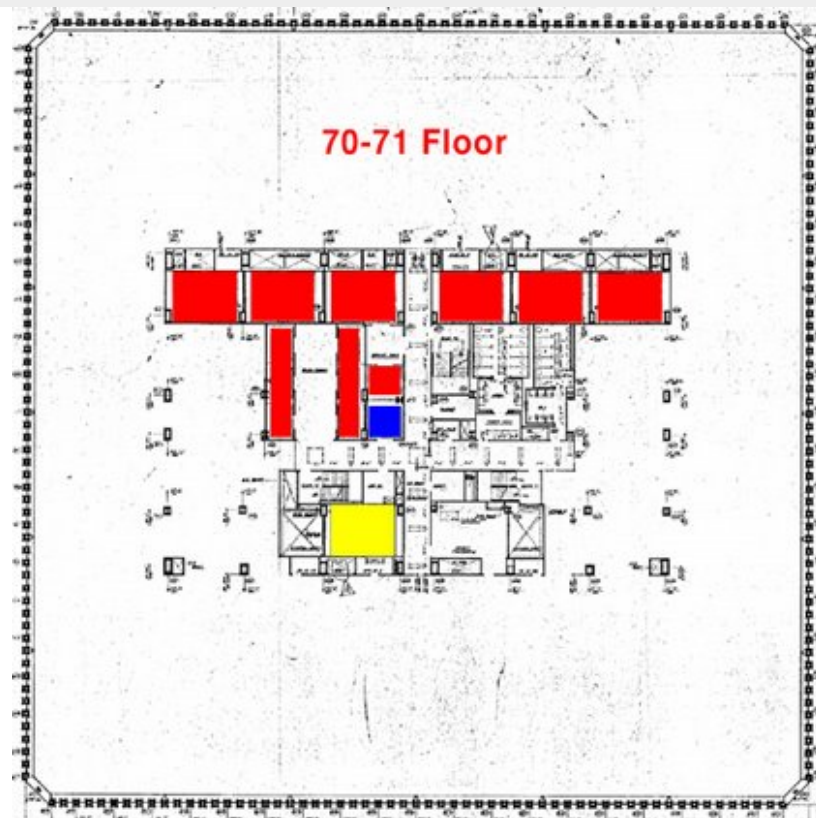
The graphics below illustrate elevator shaft continuity on and below the aircraft impact zones. The colored areas represent shafts, not necessarily individual elevator cars. The **blue** area in the floor plans below indicates the #50 freight elevator shaft, which is continuous from the impact zones to the lowest basement level, B6. In the north tower, with elevator operator Arturo Griffith and carpenter Marlene Cruz aboard, the #50 elevator was hit by a blast, dropped several floors, and stopped below the B1 landing. A large fireball came through the shaft just after Griffith and Cruz were pulled from smoky elevator.

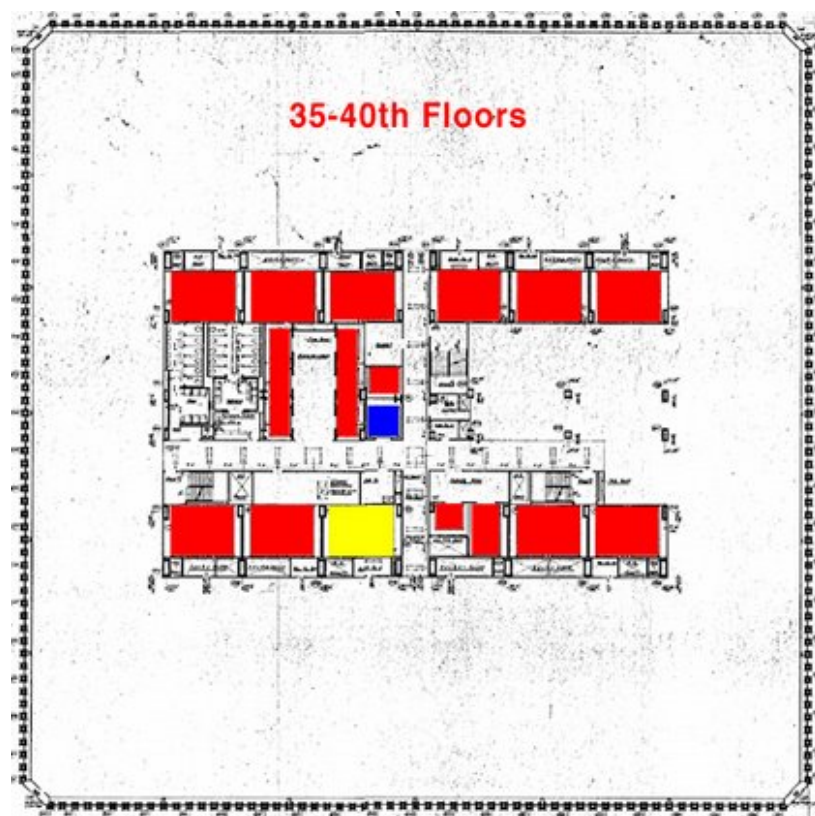
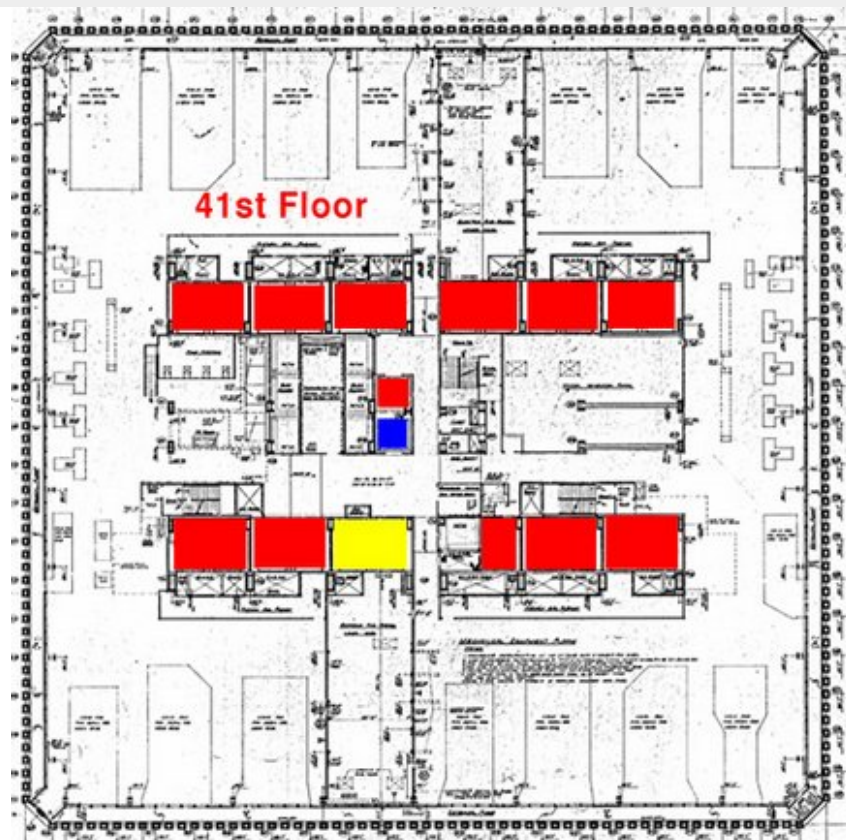
The yellow area indicates the large #6 and #7 elevators, which led to Windows on the World in the north tower (WTC 1) and to the observation deck in the south tower (WTC 2). This shaft is continuous from the impact zones to sublevel

B4, where several people within the core area were injured by the jet fuel blast, and where building engineer Edward McCabe said the blast came "about 30 seconds" after he felt the building shift.

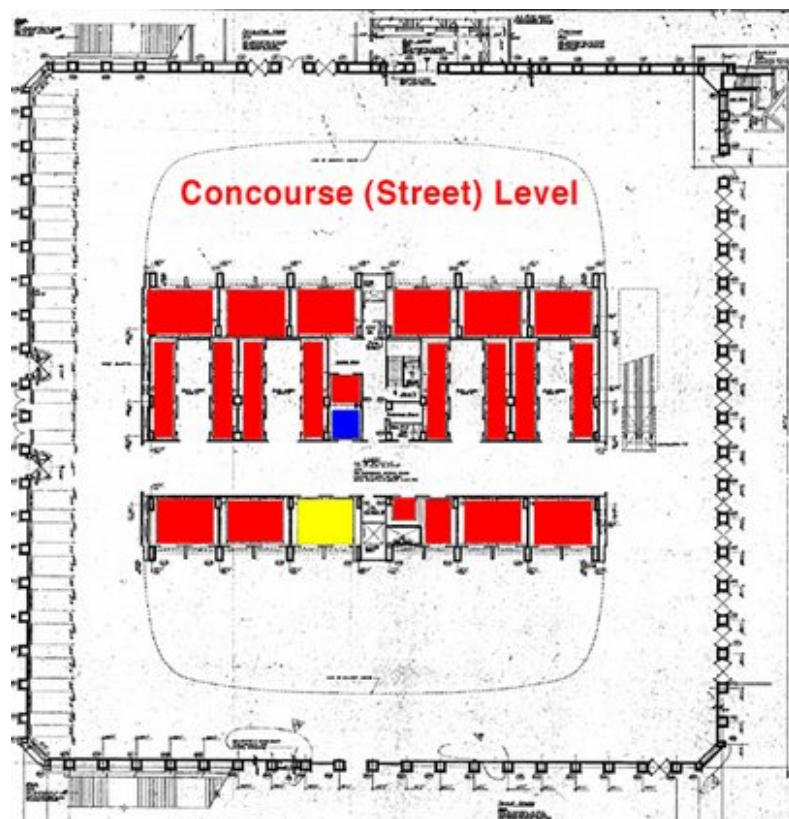
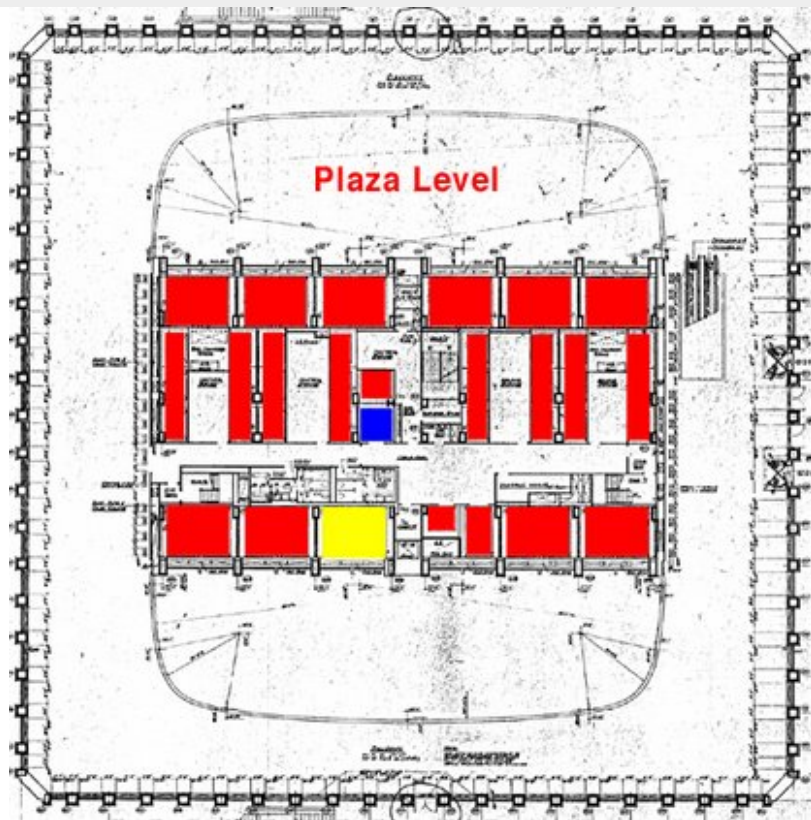
The north tower's 93rd floor was the lowest level of aircraft debris impact.



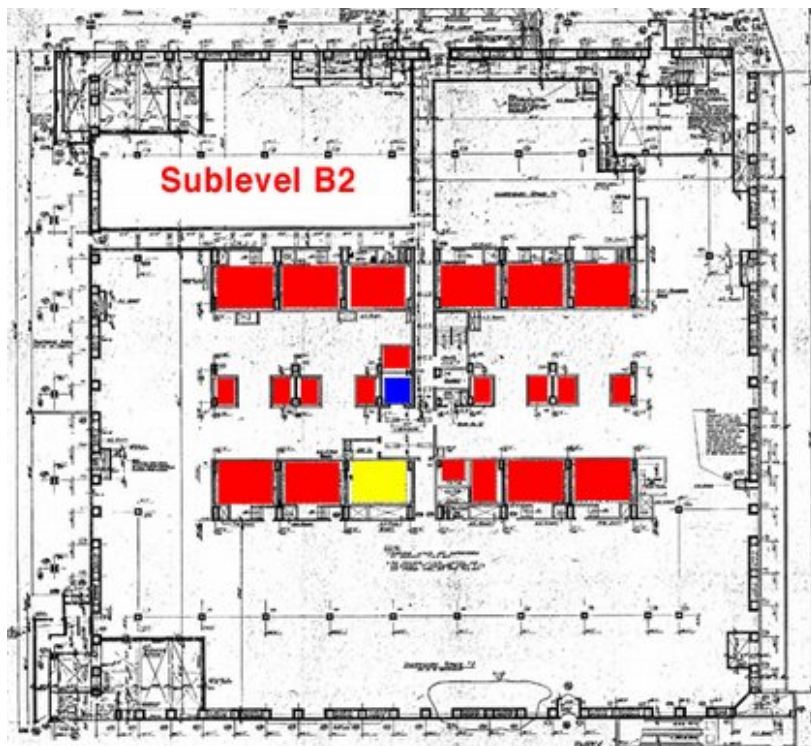


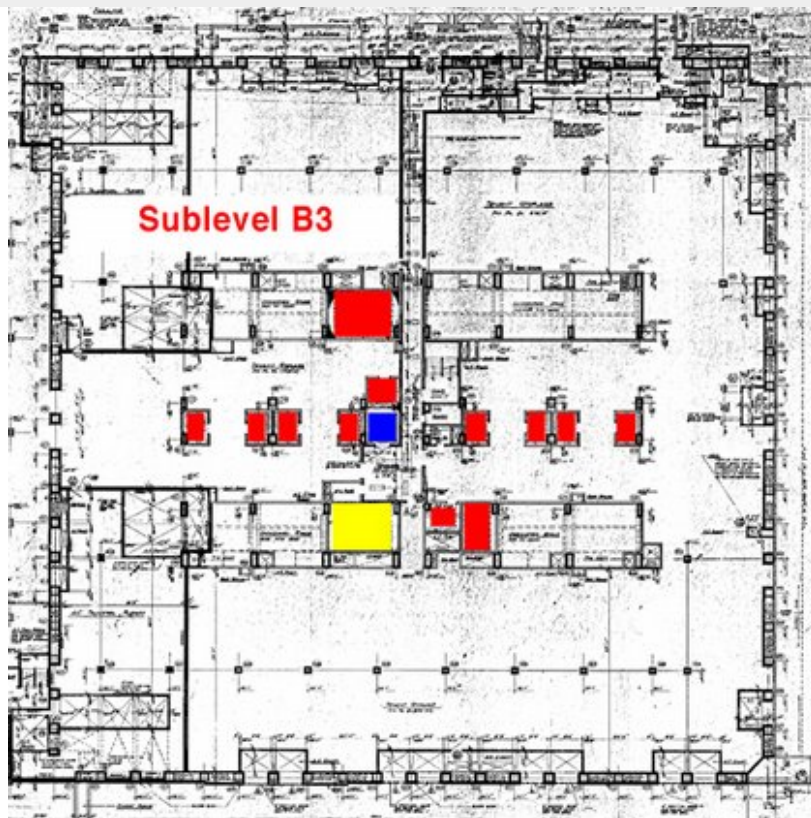


Several of the large express passenger elevators, which service the sky lobbies, plunged to the main lobby level. At least one of those falling elevators was accompanied by a huge fireball that burst into the lobby and concourse levels. Only four people are known to have survived in the south tower express elevators.

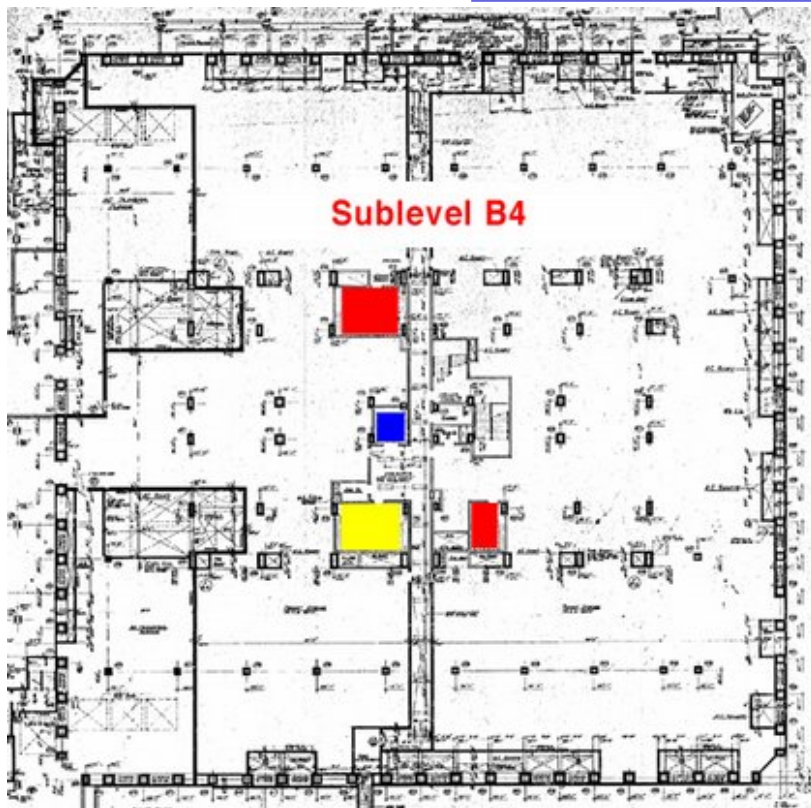


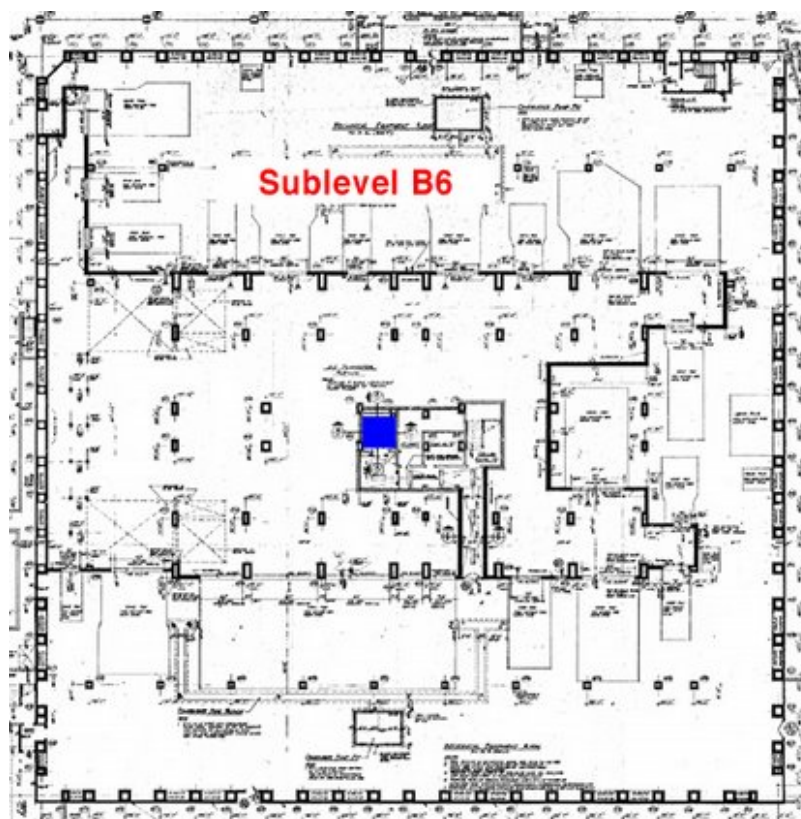
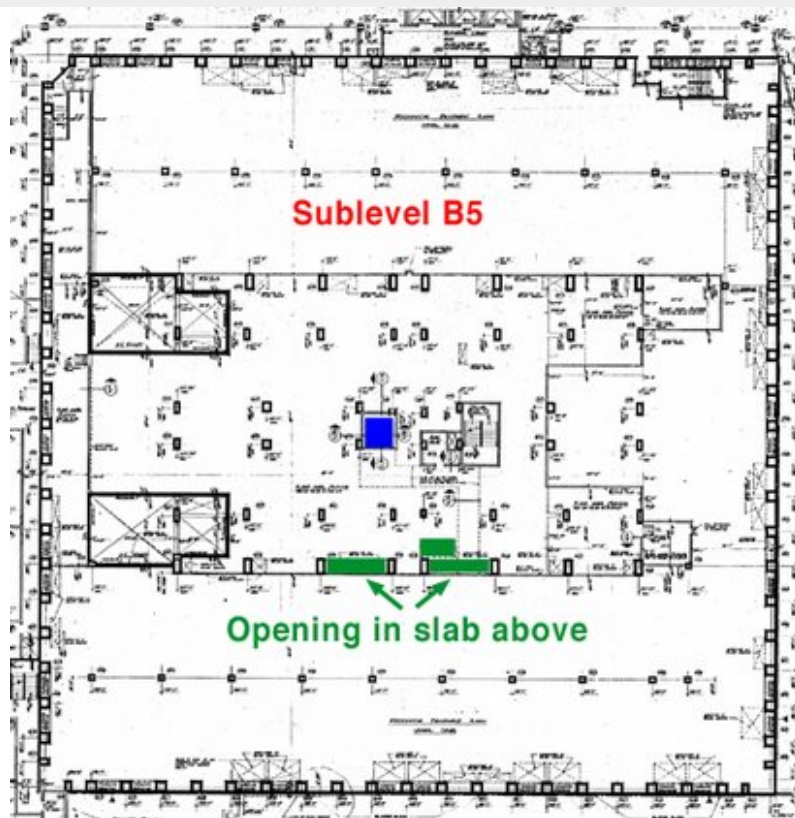
William Rodriguez was on the B1 level of the north tower when flight 11 hit.
Felipe David was burned while standing in front of a freight elevator shaft on the B1 or B2 level.





Several people were injured within the core on the north tower B4 level, after the impact. Several elevator pits ended at that level. See Ed McCabe's account on the [north tower basement witness page](#).





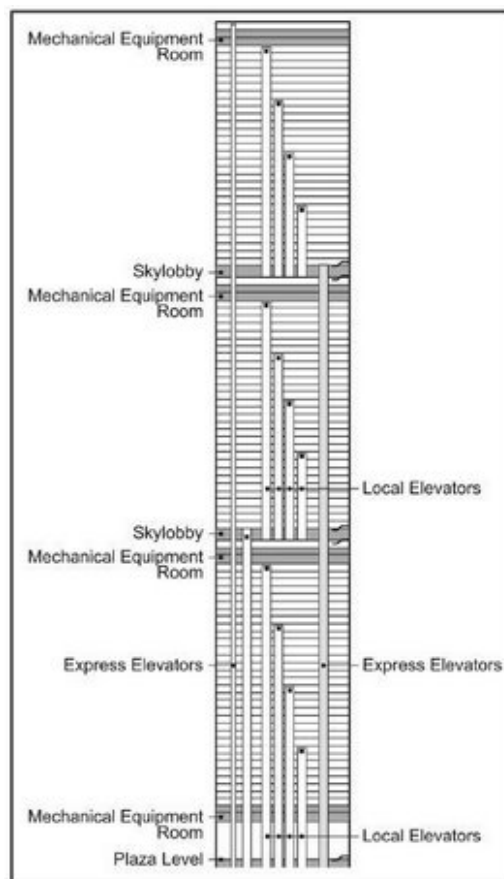
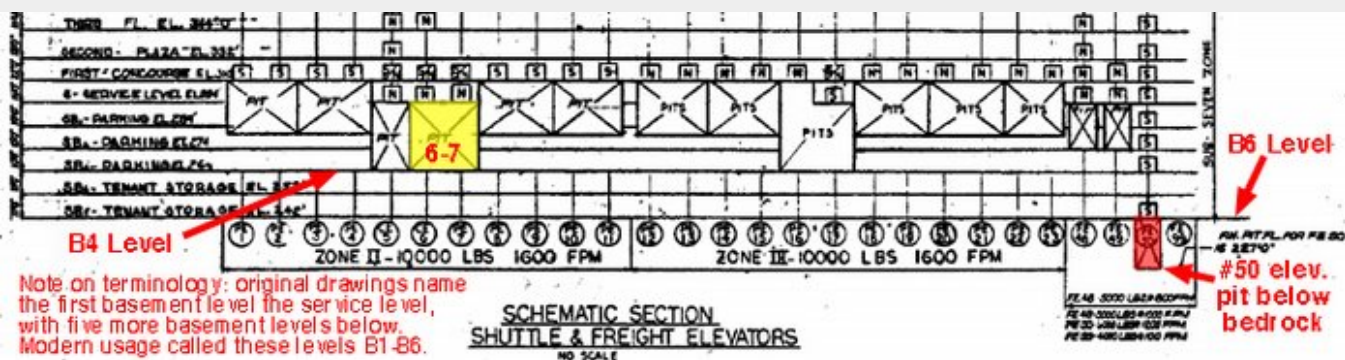


Figure 2-5. Arrangement of express and local elevators.

Note: diagram above doesn't show freight elevators.

Excellent Graphic: [3 lives, 87 floors](#) (North tower evacuation route)

An elevator engineer in the south tower reports:

"As we got into the sky lobby area, there were shuttle cars that had come up from the first floor from the lobby. I started to shut those down at that 44th floor. People in the local elevators coming down from the floors above in the second zone, now there were more people in fact coming down out of those elevators than there were going up because usually it's a very busy time of the morning when people are coming up into the building. A lot of people were coming down out of those local cars, some of them were trying to get into the shuttle cars. I shut them down.

The shuttle cars were those cars that would run from a lobby up to a zone. They had three zones in the building. They had the first zone which ran from one to 42, then the second zone started from 44 up to 76, and the third zone started from 78 up to 110."

As I turned around to go back toward the core of the building in the lobby, the second plane hit, and that shook the building.

We heard the explosion and within a matter of seconds after that impact, I heard – and as well as everybody else heard – this noise, this increasing sound of wind. And it was getting louder and louder. It was like a bomb, not quite the sound of a bomb coming down from a bomber. It was a sound of wind increasing, a whistling sound, increasing in sound.

I'm looking from the lobby up to a mezzanine area or the second floor where they lined up all the people to go up to the rooftop, and I'm looking up expecting something, building parts to be coming down, because I wasn't quite sure what that noise was.

But I found out later, when the plane came through the building, it cut the hoist ropes, the governor ropes, of (the) 6 and 7 cars, which was the observation cars.

What we heard was 6 and 7 car free-falling from the 107th floor and they impacted the basement at B-2 Level. And that's the explosion that filled the lobby within a matter of two or three seconds, engulfed the lobby in dust, smoke.

And apparently from what I talked to with other mechanics, they saw the doors, the hatch doors blow off in the lobby level of 6 and 7 car.

There were a couple of people I knew that worked for the building. You did a story on Carmen Griffen (Arturo's wife), one of the elevator operators, I know her. So this was, she was lucky to get out, very lucky.

And some of the operators then, people in 50 car – 50 car was the car that ran the entire length of the building when the planes came through. In B Tower, they cut the hoist ropes on 50 car A and B – there were two cars in each tower. Basically the buildings were very similar in design, and as far as their elevator structure, it was very similar. So you had matching elevators in each tower. And 50 car, in each tower, ran all floors from B6 up to 109. So that was, again, one of the cars, like 6 and 7 car in A Tower, they ran up to the Windows of the World. I can't imagine what it must've been like when the planes came through.

And the noise, the wind noise we heard was, you have to picture that there are two cars or cabs in a hoist length. And a hoist weighs only so big, and it's encapsulated by walls, so as these two cars came, fell together, the air pressure underneath would cause that sound that we heard."<http://archive.recononline.com/adayinseptember/jones.htm>

Carmen and Arturo Griffith again:

They were both operating elevators in the north tower on Sept. 11. Arturo was running 50A, the big freight car going from the six-level basement to the 108th floor. When American Airlines Flight 11 struck at 8:46 a.m., Arturo and a co-worker were heading from the second-level basement to the 49th floor.

Like his wife, who had just closed the doors on a passenger elevator leaving the 78th floor, Arturo heard a sudden whistling sound and the impact. Cables were severed and Arturo's car plunged into free fall.

"The only thing I remember saying was 'Oh, God, Oh, God, I'm going to die,' " he says, recalling how he tried to protect his head as the car plummeted.

The emergency brakes caught after 15 or 16 floors. The imploding elevator door crushed Arturo's right knee and broke the tibia below it. His passenger escaped injury. (The 50 car came to rest just below the B1 landing.)

...All that morning, Carmen had been carrying hundreds of passengers from the 78th-floor sky lobby to the bond-trading offices of Cantor Fitzgerald on the 101st to 105th floors and the Windows on the World restaurant above that.

"They were so packed (in the elevators) — like sardines," she says.

A full elevator had just left the 78th floor, and Carmen was about to carry up six or seven stragglers. The plane struck as the doors of her elevator closed. They could hear debris smash into the top of the car; then the elevator cracked open, and flames poured in. Carmen jammed her fingers between the closed doors, pulled them partly open and held them as passengers clambered over and under her 5-foot-6 frame to escape.

Before finally throwing herself out onto the lobby floor, she glanced back to be sure the elevator was empty. That was when fire scorched her face with second- and third-degree burns, and literally welded her hooped right earring to her neck. Her hands were badly burned.

Carmen was helped down the 78 floors to an ambulance just as her husband was carried out of the basement on a piece of plywood and a hand truck, each certain — after seeing the burning buildings from the street outside — that the other was dead. http://www.usatoday.com/life/sept11/2002-09-10-survivor-griffiths_x.htm

[Next: Descriptions of jet fuel dispersion in the towers](#)

Descriptions of Jet Fuel Dispersion in the Towers

For an excellent summary of the official studies of the collapse of the Twin Towers, see [NIST Investigation of the World Trade Center Disaster – Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Of the evacuees interviewed by NIST, 72% reported the smell of fuel fumes in the stairwells of the north tower, and 63% in the south tower. (NIST NCSTAR 1-7A p. 17)

From NIST [NCSTAR 1](#) Federal Building and Fire Safety Investigation of the World Trade Center Disaster: Final Report of the National Construction Safety Team on the Collapses of the World Trade Center Towers

North Tower

2.4 THE JET FUEL

To the wings of the 767-200ER, the perimeter columns acted like knife blades, slashing the aluminum fuel tanks and atomizing much of the 10,000 gal of jet fuel liquid into a spray of fuel droplets. Atomized jet fuel is highly flammable (similar to kerosene), so both the hot debris and the numerous pieces of electrical and electronic gear in the offices were more than sufficient as ignition sources. A surge of combusting fuel rapidly filled the floors, mixing with dust from the pulverized walls and floor slabs. The pressure created by the heated gases forced the ignited mist out the entrance gash and blown-out windows on the east and south sides of the tower. The resulting fireballs could be seen for miles, precipitating many 9-1-1 calls.

Less than 15 percent of the jet fuel burned in the spray cloud inside the building. A roughly comparable amount was consumed in the fireballs outside the building. Thus, well over half of the jet fuel remained in the building, unburned in the initial fires. Some splashed onto the office furnishings and combustibles from the aircraft that lodged on the impacted floors, there to ignite (immediately or later) the fires that would continue to burn for the remaining life of the building. Some of the burning fuel shot up and down the elevator shafts, blowing out doors and walls on other floors all the way down to the basement. Flash fires in the lobby blew out many of the plate glass windows. Fortunately, there were not enough combustibles near the elevators for major fires to start on the lower floors.

2.5 8:47 A.M. TO 9:02 A.M. EDT

The burning of the jet fuel cloud had consumed much of the oxygen within the 94th and 96th floors, although photographs showing survivors indicated there were some zones with breathable air. The oxygen-starved fires died down, but didn't quite go out. Within the first 2 min after the impact, fires could be seen in the north side windows on the 93rd through 97th floors, the 96th floor of the south face, and the 94th floor of the east face. As fresh air entered the perforated facades, there began the steady burning of the office furnishings and the 13 tons of combustibles from the aircraft that would eventually overwhelm the already damaged building. By 9:00 a.m., these fires had grown and spread to the extent shown in Figure 2-5. In addition to burning around the aircraft entrance hole, there was intense burning on the north, east, and west faces of the 97th floor. Large fires burned on the south side of the 96th floor and the east side of the 94th floor. At 8:52 a.m., a stream of smoke emerged from the south side of the 104th floor, although there was no evidence of a significant fire there yet.

There was no way to fight the fires. The piping providing the water supply to the automatic sprinklers had been broken, and water was flowing down the stairwells. Even had this not happened, the system was designed to supply water to about 8 sprinkler heads at one time, enough to control the flames from as much as 1,500 ft² of burning material. The water supply was likely sufficient to control fires up to triple that size. The fires, however, had already grown far larger than that.

Table 2–1. Locations of occupants of WTC 1.

Time	Evacuated	Lobby to 91 st Floor	92 nd to 110 th Floor
8:46	0	7,545	1,355
9:03	1,250	6,300	1,355
9:59	6,700	850	1,355
10:28	7,450	107	1,355

Note: The numbers in the rows do not add to the estimated total of 8,900 due to rounding errors in the less certain values.

At the time, there were some survivors from the 92nd through 99th floors. Most of those who were able moved to the areas where the fires had not yet spread. Some were seen looking out from the former window spaces and even standing on the deformed structural steel. At 8:52 a.m., the first of at least 111 people was observed falling from the building.

Hundreds of people were on the floors above the impact zone. They soon realized that they were unable to go downward to get away from the smoke and heat that were building up around them. At 8:54 a.m., occupants began breaking windows to provide access to fresh air. By 9:02 a.m., 26 calls, representing hundreds of people, had been made to 9-1-1, asking for help and seeking more information about what was happening. Some of the people went toward the roof. However, there was no hope because roof evacuation was neither planned nor practical, and the exit doors to the roof were locked.

While the occupants were not advised in advance that roof evacuation was not a viable option, there was, and is, no requirement in the NYC Building Code for the roof to be accessible for emergency evacuation or rescue, and roof rescue was not contemplated in the WTC evacuation plans. Even had the roof been accessible, the helicopters could not have landed due to the severe heat and smoke.

Outside the building, a flurry of activity was beginning. Personnel of the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY) were several blocks away, investigating a gas leak at street level, and observed the aircraft impact. Within a minute, FDNY had notified its communications center and requested additional alarms for the WTC. A Port Authority Police Department (PAPD) unit had reported to its Police Desk that there had been an explosion with major injuries. By 8:50 a.m., the first fire engines had arrived, and an Incident Command Post had been established in the WTC 1 lobby. An Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Command was established 3 min later. More and more reports of damage, injuries, and deaths flooded the communications channels, and knowledge of the extent of the catastrophe was emerging. At 8:52 a.m., the first New York City Police Department (NYPD) aviation unit arrived to evaluate the possibility of roof rescue, but reported they were unable to land on the roof due to the heavy smoke. At 8:55 a.m., the firefighters entering WTC 1 began climbing the stairs (Figure 2–6). Their objectives were to evacuate and rescue everyone below the fires, then to cut paths through the fires and rescue all those above the fires.

South Tower

Table 3-2. Location of occupants of WTC 2.

Time	Escaped	Lobby to 76 th Floor	77 th to 110 th Floor
8:46	0	5,700	2,900
9:03	3,200	4,800	637
9:36	6,950	1,050	619
9:59	8,000	11	619

Note: The numbers in the rows do not add to the estimated total of 8,600 occupants due to rounding in the less certain values.

This aircraft had also severed the pipes that fed the automatic sprinklers and destroyed all elevator service to the impact floors. But, unlike AA Flight 11, the off-center strike of UA Flight 175 had left one of the three stairways passable, Stairway A on the north side of the building core.

When the aircraft struck WTC 2, emergency responders had already been dispatched to the WTC site, and the initial surge of emergency responder radio had subsided to a level approximately three times that of normal operations. However, the radio traffic volume was still at a level where approximately one-third to one-half of the radio communications was not understandable.

Stairwell A remained passable because it was well west of the aircraft strike center and partially protected by elevator machinery and the long dimension of the building core.

3.4 THE JET FUEL

Within about one half of a second, dust and debris flew out of windows on the east and north faces. Several small fireballs of atomized jet fuel burst from windows on the east face of the 81st and 82nd floors, coalescing into a single, large fireball that spanned the entire face. A tenth of a second later, fire appeared in the dust clouds ejected from the south face of the 79th, 81st, and 82nd floors. Almost simultaneously, three fireballs came from the east side of the north face. The largest came from the 80th through 82nd floors. A second, somewhat smaller one came from the same floors on the northeast corner of the building. The smallest emerged from the 79th floor. No dust or fireballs came from the west face.

As in WTC 1, less than 15 percent of the jet fuel burned in the spray cloud inside the building. Roughly 10 percent to 25 percent was consumed in the fireballs outside the building. Thus, well over half of the jet fuel remained after the initial fireballs.

The rapid burning of the jet fuel inside the building created an overpressure that was estimated at 2 psi to 3 psi for 0.5 s to 2 s. For a window and frame of over 10 ft², this amounts to over 3,000 pounds of force, more than enough to break windows. Photographs of the north and east faces appeared to show hanging floor slabs where the fireballs had been ejected from the building. Based on the failure of the truss seat connections, NIST estimated that the static capacity of an undamaged floor was 4.8 psi against uplift pressure and 4.4 psi against downward pressure over the entire floor. It is not unreasonable that a combination of physical damage from the impact and overpressure from the fireballs caused the partial collapse of these floor slabs.

From Popular Mechanics' [Debunking 9/11 Myths: Why Conspiracy Theories Can't Stand Up to the Facts](#)

A three year study into the collapse of the towers found that airplane debris sliced through utility shafts in both towers' cores, creating conduits for burning jet fuel and fiery destruction throughout the buildings.

Supplement to the report notes that elevator lobbies throughout the building were particularly affected by the airplane impacts, likely by the excess jet fuel ignited by the crash pouring down the elevator shafts.

NIST lead investigator Shyam Sunder explains that the burning jet fuel simply followed the path of least resistance. The core of the building is where a large number of elevator shafts and stairwells were damaged. These provided an easy path for jet fuel to traverse down," Sunder tells Pop Mechanics.

NIST investigators spoke with more than 1,000 survivors and witnesses of the attack as part of their attempt to determine the progression of damage to the buildings. A number of witnesses reported seeing pockets of fire in locations far from floors directly affected by the aircraft impacts.

NIST granted all witnesses anonymity in exchange for their cooperation- One witness, near an elevator between the 40th and 50th floors of the North Tower recalled,

"I saw the elevator in front of me had flames coming out of it. The elevator was closed but the flames came from the front where the doors meet and on the sides...I saw a chandelier shaking; it was really moving...black smoke started filling the corridor, it got really dense fast." And a survivor in the basement of the North Tower at the time of the attack recalled, "I saw a big bright orange color coming through the basement with the smoke... A fireball came shooting out the basement door."

Investigators heard additional reports that some elevators "slammed right down" to the ground floor in loud violent crashes. The doors cracked open on the lobby floor and flames came out and people died", says James Quintiere, an engineering professor at the University of Maryland and a NIST adviser. A similar observation was made by Jules and Gedeon Naudet. On the day of the attacks, the French brothers were making a documentary

about Tony Benetatos, a rookie NY City firefighter blocks from the WTC. Benetatos became one of the first responders to the N Tower. As Jules Naudet followed him into the lobby, minutes after the first aircraft struck, the filmmaker saw victims on fire, a scene he found too horrific to record.

Highly recommended for its powerful footage inside the north tower shortly after the impact of flight 11, and of the collapse of the south tower as experienced in the north tower lobby: the Naudet Brothers' "[9/11 – The Filmmakers' Commemorative Edition](#)."

From *USA Today*: "[Elevators Were Disaster in Disaster](#)" (2002)

Elevator shafts worked like chimneys, funneling unbearable smoke to floors above the crashes. The shafts also channeled burning jet fuel throughout both towers. Fire moved not only up and down but also side to side, from shaft to shaft, unleashing explosions in elevator lobbies and in restrooms next to the shafts.

USA TODAY made an intensive effort over the past six months to determine what happened to the World Trade Center elevators. Reporters interviewed more than 50 people who were in elevators at the time the jets hit or moments before. The newspaper also reviewed 2,500 pages of accounts written by survivors and reports in other media outlets, examined architectural plans and spoke to elevator experts and mechanics who worked at the Trade Center.

The result is the first in-depth look at an important but neglected part of the World Trade Center disaster.

From "In Data Trove, a Graphic Look at Towers' Fall" By James Glanz and Eric Lipton, *The New York Times*, October 29, 2002

(Of the Silverstein/Weidlinger study)

..."Taken in the aggregate, it represents a milestone in the forensic engineering of a disaster." said Jeremy Isenberg, a member of the National Academy of Engineering and president of Weidlinger Associates, where some of the work was done, who believes the information can be used to build safer skyscrapers and to better understand the risks posed by existing ones. "I have never seen this level of technical knowledge and experience brought to bear on a single problem."

The mass of documents and analysis was compiled over the last year by a kind of dream team of engineering experts as the two litigants weighed in on the question of how much Mr. Silverstein should be compensated for the loss of the towers. Mr. Silverstein says that he is owed about \$7 billion, the insurance companies half that.

...Next, of course, came the fire. By assembling thousands of photographs, videos and witness accounts, Richard L.P. Custer, the national technical director of ArupFire, a Massachusetts fire science company, prepared a color-coded map of each face of the two towers that shows the spread of fire and smoke from the moment the fireballs erupted until each of the towers collapsed. •

What emerges from this analysis and a separate fire survey by Exponent Failure Analysis may help explain why everyone in the two floors just below the plane impact in the north tower ultimately died, even if they survived the initial impacts. In the south tower, most people below impact survived and were able to flee. •

...As the American Airlines Flight 11 rammed onto the north tower, the jet fuel was sprayed into a much larger area within the tower, the analysis shows. It documents office workers who reported burning ceilings, floors and elevators at locations throughout the lower reaches of the north tower. Flames even reached the north tower lobby, where several people were severely burned as they stood near the elevators. •

The rapid and wide dispersion of the fuel apparently ignited fires on the 92nd and 93rd floors of the north tower, just below the impact zone, where Carr Futures and Marsh & McLennan had their offices. The fires also engulfed another series of floors just above impact and they somehow spread to the offices of Cantor Fitzgerald in the tower's upper reaches, possibly through a mechanical shaft, the analysis finds.

From "[Courage Above and Beyond the Call of Duty: A Report of the September 11, 2001 Experiences of Port Authority Engineers at the World Trade Center](#)"

From the South Tower FCC (Fire Command Center), Amatuccio now joined by Riccardelli established two-way communication with Bobbitt and Parente who were manning the North Tower FCC. They continued to work with the firemen in both towers, in spite of the danger to which they were exposed from debris that was falling from the tower floors above. The smell of burning jet fuel was becoming more and more prevalent at the FCC levels in both buildings.

[Next: Accounts of Tower Structural Instability and Expected Collapse](#)

Accounts of Tower Structural Instability and Expected Collapse

[Home](#)
[9/11 Links](#)

Unless otherwise noted, FDNY accounts are from [here](#) and PAPD accounts are from [here](#). Further reference: [NIST Structural and Fire Protection Damage Due to Aircraft Impact](#).

The North Tower

"Who cannot (sic) forget that eerie creaking sound that emanated throughout the city right before the North Tower fell?" –Marc Morial, President and CEO, National Urban League [Source](#)

- At 9:30 am, a FDNY Chief Officer inside WTC 1 feels the building move and makes the decision that the building is no longer safe.
- At 9:49 am, NYPD helicopters provide a radio report stating that "large pieces" are falling from WTC 2.
- At 10:07 am, NYPD aviation units warn that WTC 1 may collapse.
- At 10:20 am, NYPD aviation unit reports that WTC 1 is leaning to the south. [Source](#)

FDNY Assistant Chief Joseph Callan: "Approximately 40 minutes after I arrived in the lobby, I made a decision that the building was no longer safe. And that was based on the conditions in the lobby, large pieces of plaster falling, all the 20 foot high glass panels on the exterior of the lobby were breaking. **There was obvious movement of the building, and that was the reason on the handy talky I gave the order for all Fire Department units to leave the north tower."**[Source](#)

Callan: "For me to make the decision to take our firefighters out of the building with civilians still in it, that was very tough for me, but **I did that because I did not think the building was safe any longer, and that was just prior to 9:30."**[Source](#)

EMS Division Chief John Peruggia: "I was in a discussion with Mr. Rotanz and I believe it was a representative from the Department of Buildings, but I'm not sure. Some engineer type person, and several of us were huddled talking in the lobby and it was brought to my attention, it was believed that the structural damage that was suffered to the towers was quite significant and they were very confident that the building's stability was compromised and they felt that the north tower was in danger of a near imminent collapse.

I grabbed EMT Zarrillo, I advised him of that information. I told him he was to proceed immediately to the command post where Chief Ganci was located. Told him where it was across the street from number 1 World Trade Center. I told him "You see Chief Ganci and Chief Ganci only. **Provide him with the information that the building integrity is severely compromised and they believe the building is in danger of imminent collapse.**" So, he left off in that direction."

NYPD Aviation Reports

FDNY firefighter Kevin Gorman: "Guys were giving us water, wet rags to put on our head, and we were standing there, and there was a cop I knew who came by and gave me a drink of water, and then as he was standing there, he said, "Aviation just reported that the north tower is leaning." I said, "Which way is it leaning?" He said, "This way." So we started to turn around walking. John Malley, who was right behind me, I turned around for him, because he was doing something, either putting his coat on or something, and as I was looking at him I heard the explosion, looked up, and saw like three floors explode, saw the antenna coming down, and turned around and ran north.

Q. About how long would you say it was from when the police officer told you it was leaning?

A. Within 30 seconds."

FDNY Firefighter Brendan Lowrey: "We started walking south to the command center when a Police Officer stopped us and said, "hold up, guys. I have helicopters --" he was on the cell phone "--on the cell phone here." And he says, "when this one comes down, it's coming right for us." Meaning coming up West Street.

NYPD Aviation Units: Minutes after the south tower collapsed at the World Trade Center, police helicopters hovered near the remaining tower to check its condition. **"About 15 floors down from the top, it looks like it's glowing red," the pilot of one helicopter, Aviation 14, radioed at 10:07 a.m. "It's inevitable."**

Seconds later, another pilot reported: "I don't think this has too much longer to go. I would evacuate all people within the area of that second building." [Source](#)

10:20 NYPD – Aviation 14 states the WTC 1 is leaning. (NYPD, McKinsey & Company) NIST NCSTAR 1-8, p. 227

Federal engineering investigators studying the destruction of the World Trade Center's twin towers on Sept. 11 said New York Police Department aviation units reported an **inward bowing of the buildings' columns in the minutes before they collapsed, a signal they were about to fall.**

"The NYPD aviation unit reported critical information about the pending collapse of the building," said Sivaraj Shyam-Sunder, who heads the institute, at a press briefing in New York. "Any time that information could have been communicated faster to the emergency responders in the buildings, it would have helped save lives."

According to Shyam-Sunder, the concave bowing of the steel was seen on the sides of the towers opposite where the planes hit them. At 10:06 a.m. that morning, an officer in a police helicopter reported that ``it's not going to take long before the north tower comes down." This was 20 minutes before it collapsed. In another radio transmission at 10:21 a.m., the officer said he saw buckling in the north tower's southern face, Shyam-Sunder said.

[Source](#)

Inside the North Tower

Firefighter Mike Cancel, Ladder 10: We could feel the building starting to twist above us. I called Ladder 10 three times, Ladder 10 roof to Ladder 10. There was no answer. I said we have to evacuate, the building's coming down. Again, there was no response. [Source](#)

On the 56th floor, an architect believes the building was failing structurally.

Architect **Bob Shelton** had his foot in a cast; he'd broken it falling off a curb two weeks ago. He heard the explosion of the first plane hitting the north tower from his 56th-floor office in the south tower. As he made his way down the stairwell, his building came under attack as well. **"You could hear the building cracking. It sounded like when you have a bunch of spaghetti, and you break it in half to boil it."** Shelton knew that what he was hearing was bad. **"It was structural failure,"** Shelton says. **"Once a building like that is off center, that's it."** [Source](#)

Structural Engineer Al Masetti: At some point, perhaps when I was down around the 20th floor (north tower), there was a very clear and distinct radio message: **"...structural instability..."** It seemed obvious to me that some lightly dressed and unencumbered fireman had reached the scene of the impact, was able to evaluate what was there, and was able to report what he saw. [Source](#)

An engineer from the Department of Buildings reported that the **structural damage appeared to be immense.** The stability of both buildings was compromised. In particular, the engineer was worried about how long the north tower would stand. Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn. "102 Minutes: The Untold Story of the Fight to Survive Inside the Twin Towers" New York: Times Books, 2004

Roy Bell: "They said they had stretchers and wheelchairs down there, but I just wanted to get the hell out of the building," he said. "I ran into a building engineer, who told me there was only one safe exit out and that the building wasn't stable." [Source](#)

Around 9:15, Drohan heard (Port Authority WTC Construction Manager Frank) DeMartini over the walkie-talkie. "Any construction inspector at ground level."

Drohan acknowledged that he was on the street.

"Can you escort a couple of structural inspectors to the 78th floor?" DeMartini asked.

DeMartini had seen something in the steel—Drohan was not sure what—that he did not like. **The drywall had been knocked off parts of the sky lobby, exposing the elevator shafts, and revealing the core of the building. That had prompted his first radio alert, warning that the elevators might collapse. Now DeMartini wanted inspectors from a structural engineering firm to come up to the 78th-floor sky lobby and take a look.** (102 Minutes, p. 147)

William Rodriguez, who led firefighters partway up the stairwells (from an account of a speech of his): The firemen made it up to the 27th floor but were exhausted from the burden of their equipment. As William had ascended the stairwell he, as well as the firemen, had heard explosions from the 20th through the 30th floor. Chunks of the building were falling down all around them and **they could literally hear the creaking in the building.** [Source](#)

William Rodriguez: The stairs were cracking. The sheet rock, when I went up opening the doors, was falling on top of me and on top of the firemen constantly. And **the swaying of the building** made it easier for that to come off. [Source](#)

PAPD Sergeant David Lim: On the way down, we were losing our lights & could feel the bldg falling apart. ...You could feel the building starting to collapse internally. I got down to about the twenty-first floor, when I met Chief Romito, Captain Mazza and Lieutenant Cirri, and they had come from the Police Academy to assist. And I remember, they were trying to make a stretcher for this fellow that had difficulty breathing.

So I told the Chief, I didn't know if he knew that the other Tower was down. And I remember everybody stared at their blackberries. They had these special pagers I guess that told them when things were happening. And I remember showing the Chief the inside of the floor, because we were still in the staircase so you could see part of it: **part of the building is already collapsed in, internally.** So the Chief said, "Okay, forget about this, would you just carry him down?" (Lim later became trapped in the north tower B stairway. Source: 9/11 Commission Public Hearing testimony, day 1)

B.J.B.: Water was pouring down the stairwell, and all the while **the building was creaking and cracking, and it felt like it was coming apart.** [Source](#)

Erik O. Ronningen : I remember how calm and orderly the descent in the stairwells was... and how smoky... accompanied occasionally with **the snapping sounds of tortured pipes and walls stressed beyond endurance.**
[Source](#)

Sandra Gonzales: "**All the way down it felt like the ground was falling out from under you. I knew the building had been severely damaged, and all the way down you could feel that it was about to collapse.**"
[Source](#)

FDNY Firefighter Hugh Mettham: We reached the sixth or seventh floor and are met by many firefighters coming down the stairs, informing us that **the upper floors are collapsing** and that there's a heavy odor of gas and fuel.

Outside

PAPD Sergeant Quentin DeMarco: While forming teams and assembling equipment to make entries into the WTC, Captain Whitaker informed the undersigned that no one is to enter the buildings, **they were structurally compromised and could collapse.** A short time later I observed tower 2 collapse into West St.

FDNY Firefighter Richard Banaciski: So I was kind of looking around over there, up and down West Street and looking on Vesey and I just remember there was a police officer standing there and he just started saying, **it's starting to lean, it's starting to lean.** I remember looking up, looking at the second building and just seeing it starting to move. I just started running back down Vesey towards the water again to where I had come from. That's -- the second building came down there.

FDNY Lieutenant Robert Bohack: With that as soon as I said that **the building [north tower] made a groan like steel twisting.** I didn't have to tell those guys twice. We just started making line for West Street or the western side, the entrance we came in.

With that we ran out the front. There was, I think, a Chief's aide sort of as a lookout saying "come on come on come on." we stopped at the entrance as soon as he waved us on we go. We get to him. He was maybe 50 yards ahead of us, in front of us. On West Street I get to him and he says, "look at the building, Lou. The other one collapsed and this one is collapsing." He showed me, **about 20 stories up you see crack in the building.** I look, "holy shit, the other buildings gone."

FDNY Lieutenant George DeSimone: After that, I got out of there as quick as I could because the building was decaying. I mean, there was fire coming out of it, fire dropping down, and at that point I think we started to notice bodies dropping from the buildings.

FDNY Firefighter Dennis Fischer: **Guys, get the fuck out of here that building is going to come down. It's coming down. That building is coming down.** We looked at each other. We kind of looked around, we didn't really think it was going to happen. Maybe 15, 20 seconds after he said that, we heard the rumbling. We looked up, that I remember as plain as day. I looked up and I saw from the top, I actually watched it with my own eyes, I saw the top start to pancake down.

FDNY Firefighter Paul Bessler: **Just at that point, my radio came clear as day, "Imminent collapse.** This was a terrorist attack. Evacuate." That's exactly what I heard. I think that was Chief Picciotto that was giving the order. We relayed that again, hoping that the brothers would hear it above us, and I remember the look on Andy's face, like apprehension that we were going to leave this building.

FDNY Firefighter Frank Sweeney: I remember when we heard abandon the site, I said, wow, this would be really good to keep with us. So I started pushing this cart, and I got stuck in the doorway with it, when we started hearing this rumble. I can remember -- **I specifically remember this like twisting sound of metal.** We were probably about half a block away from the complex at this point.

You heard a big boom, it was quiet for about ten seconds. Then you could hear another one. Now I realize it was the floors starting to stack on top of each other as they were falling . It was spaced apart in the beginning, but then it got to just a tremendous roar and a rumble that I will never forget.

Thomas Bendick, FDNY EMT: At that point I could actually visually see the top floors of the north tower starting to give way and that began to collapse. At that point we all began to run north.

FDNY Supervising Fire Marshal Brian Grogan: "At that point I looked up, and it was Joe Pasquarello grabbed me, and he gave me a pull on my arm. He said, "Get the fuck out of there." I looked up --"

Q: "Were you still on West Street at this time?"

A: "Still standing there. The building just started coming down. It buckled." [Source](#)

FDNY Firefighter Brian Fitzpatrick: "Then we exited out by the marina, the North Cove Yacht Harbor, where we all basically just took a knee and we waited a couple of minutes. Everybody was in shock. We didn't know what happened. We just thought it was debris or an explosion or a secondary explosion or another bomb inside the building or another plane.

We got up and we made our way around through what turned out to be the North End Avenue and we hit Vesey. I'd say probably 25 minutes had elapsed by now. We were walking up Vesey and we got to Vesey and the West Side Highway and we were making the turn. I remember seeing the bridge as we turned and somebody came running by us saying the north tower was leaning. I didn't even know the south tower fell yet. I looked up and I actually saw the

antenna coming down." [Source](#)

PAPD Detective Edward Rapp: While I was on the phone with Stacy at the Police Desk we all of a sudden **heard metal creaking. I looked up and saw the North Tower buckling from the top.** It looked like the north and west sides of the building were twisting and then separating like a banana peel.

FDNY Firefighter Fernando Camacho: What happened was that as I was standing there and getting bandaged, **somebody said the tower is leaning.** So me and Gorman -- he had the irons. We turned around and looked, and **we could see the tower leaning.** As it started to lean, it just came straight down. Now we're running again.

Q. Which way was it leaning? Towards West Street?

A. The tower was leaning not towards -- it leaned somewhat northwest but not -- it came down pretty straight after it leaned. It didn't really continue to lean. It just leaned a little bit and then came straight down.

Q. Fine. Let me get one thing straight. From the time you noticed the leaning to the time of it coming down, are we talking about seconds here?

A. No more than three, four seconds.

PAPD Police Officer Middleton: Pedestrians began to form a crow[d] in the streets and I began to tell them to move back as far as the next block before the other building falls. As I continued to wave them back periodically you would hear a loud boom go off at the top of tower one. ...After approximately 15 minutes suddenly there was another loud boom at the upper floors, then there was a series of smaller explosions which appeared to go completely around the building at the upper floors. And another loud earth shattering blast with a large fire ball which blew out more debris and at that point everyone began to run north on West Broad Street.

PAPD Inspector Timothy Norris: Just at this time, another firefighter began to yell to us from across the street. He was looking up at the Towers and yelled for us to hurry up since he thought the second Tower was about to fall. The two firefighters and myself again picked up the injured man and managed to walk three or four steps when we felt extreme vibration and an incredible noise "like a thousand freight trains." I knew instantly that the Tower was falling down.

Robert Jones, ACE Elevator mechanic: You could see A Tower, the outside, the columns were glowing red by that time, because that had been on fire for at least a good 25 minutes by that time. B Tower, I could see tremendous structural damage to the outside of the building. We stood on the corner across the street from the towers. [Source](#)

PAPD P.O. Barry Pikaard: I was standing there about 15-20 seconds when Inspector Fields ran up to me and said the building was going to come down.

PAPD P.O. E. Finnegan: At this time an NYPD officer entered the church and ordered us to evacuate. He stated that the other tower was about to collapse.

FDNY Chief Joseph Dunne: Another ten or 15 minutes or so later, one of my guys said to me, **"listen, the north tower is making noise, we're not safe here, that building is going to come down too."**
Dennis Smith. Report From Ground Zero. New York: Viking Penguin, 2002

South Tower

There are similar, but fewer, descriptions of structural failures and warning that the south tower would collapse:

Claiborne Johnston: "It seemed we were walking down very calm, very orderly . . . and all of a sudden you felt like the ground was falling out from under you," said , who escaped from the 64th floor of the south tower. **"You knew the structure had been altered severely, and the rest of the way down you could feel that."**[Source](#)

FDNY EMS EMT Peter Constantine: We parked the ambulance with a lot of other ambulances on Vesey Street and West. We basically started grabbing equipment and helping out people who were running out from the building originally. At that time it was just chaos, everybody going everywhere. We were helping any way we could. A lot of people wanted to help. At that time, I don't know what time it was, we heard across the radio the tower's gonna fall, the tower's gonna fall.

Q: You heard that on the radio?

A: Oh yeah, it came across. And then all of a sudden, when you looked up, you froze for a couple of seconds, you saw these little pieces falling off. Then all of a sudden, everyone started to run. Then, you started to run, your helping people, helping them run. You saw it, it was amazing...like out of a movie, you know, the cloud's just chasing you. As you look back, you see it engulf people. After that was over, we all went back in.

And then, it felt like ten minutes, the other building fell. I read in the paper the next day that it was actually something like 30 minutes later that it fell. When that one fell everybody ran again. [Source](#)

FDNY EMS EMT Mary McMillan: As I was gathering it, I was saying to Mala, that I'm looking up at the

building and I said to her, this is going to fall. I said we should get out of here. This is going to fall. She says I know. I think we are in the wrong place. I tried to tell Chief Grant and Chief McCracken I think it's going to fall, but they were so busy talking among themselves, I didn't have a chance to tell them what I was feeling. I think I should have shared with everyone, but when I felt that way, I looked around me. I gathered the resources, but I'm thinking what do I do when this thing falls. I looked around me and I saw this building on my right. It had the glass bottom doors and I just made reference to it in case god forbid, anything happened, my plan would be to run behind that building, grab my jacket over my head and just stay there for a while.

Sure enough, after my thoughts traveled through my head, all I heard was run and I heard the sound, a sound -- I can't really describe it. It was an unusual sound. Then they are saying run, so I started to run and I looked back and I saw this white smoke just moving in this boiling motion towards us and I was like oh, my god, what's going on. I was scared, I was frightened and I'm running and everybody's running. [Source](#)

"At 9:37, a civilian on the 106th floor of the South Tower reported to a 911 operator that a lower floor – **the '90-something floor' – was collapsing.**" (9/11 Commission Report, pg. 304)

Stanley Praitnath & Brian Clark: It was like steel bending and creaking. It made this -- I can't explain the sound, but it's like -- it was an eerie sound.

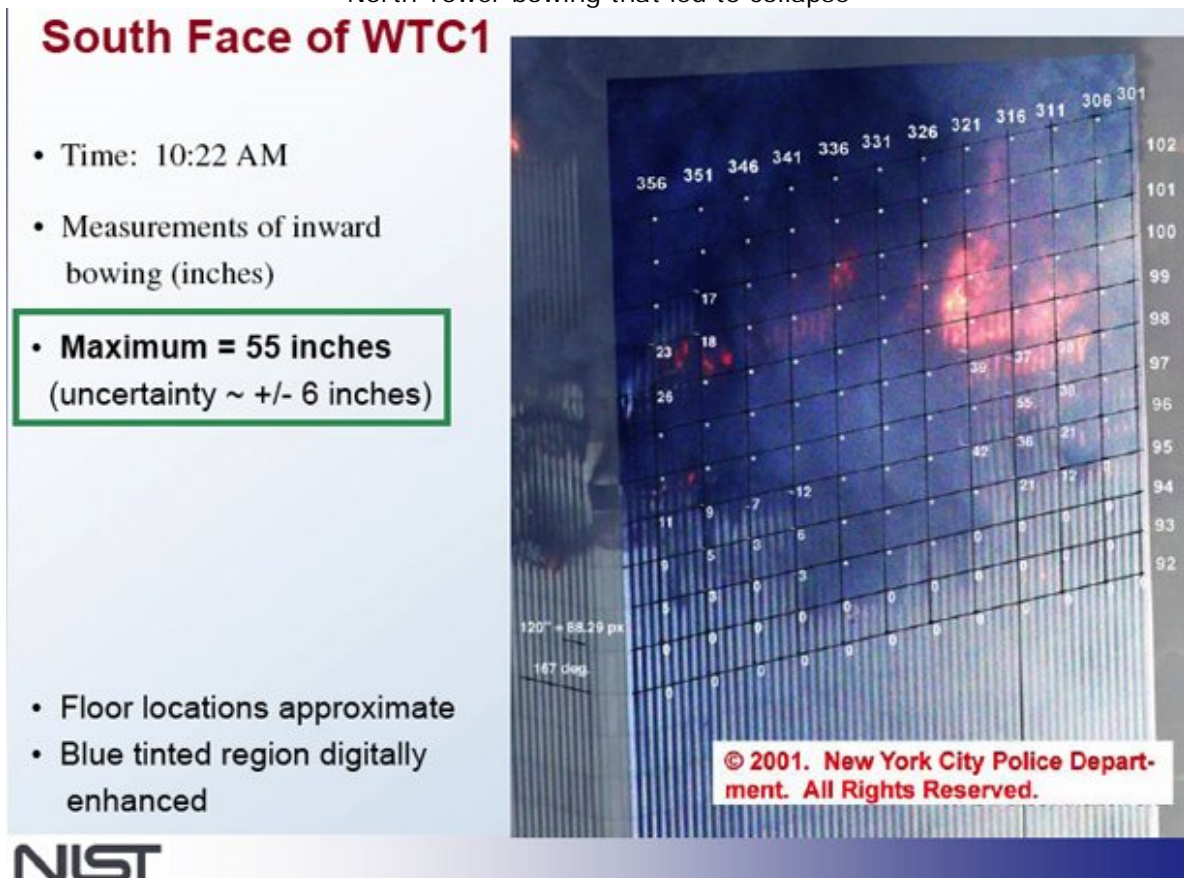
CLARK: And we heard this boom, boom, boom.

OKWU: As the tower collapsed, Stanley Praitnath and Brian Clark were watching from less than a 100 yards away, just before they ran, two of the very last people to get out alive. [Source](#)

Tommy Castaldi: "Police and firefighters were coming in to the building when we reached the lobby," Castaldi said. "The building was swaying, burning and shaking. But they went up, not back to the street...." [Source](#)

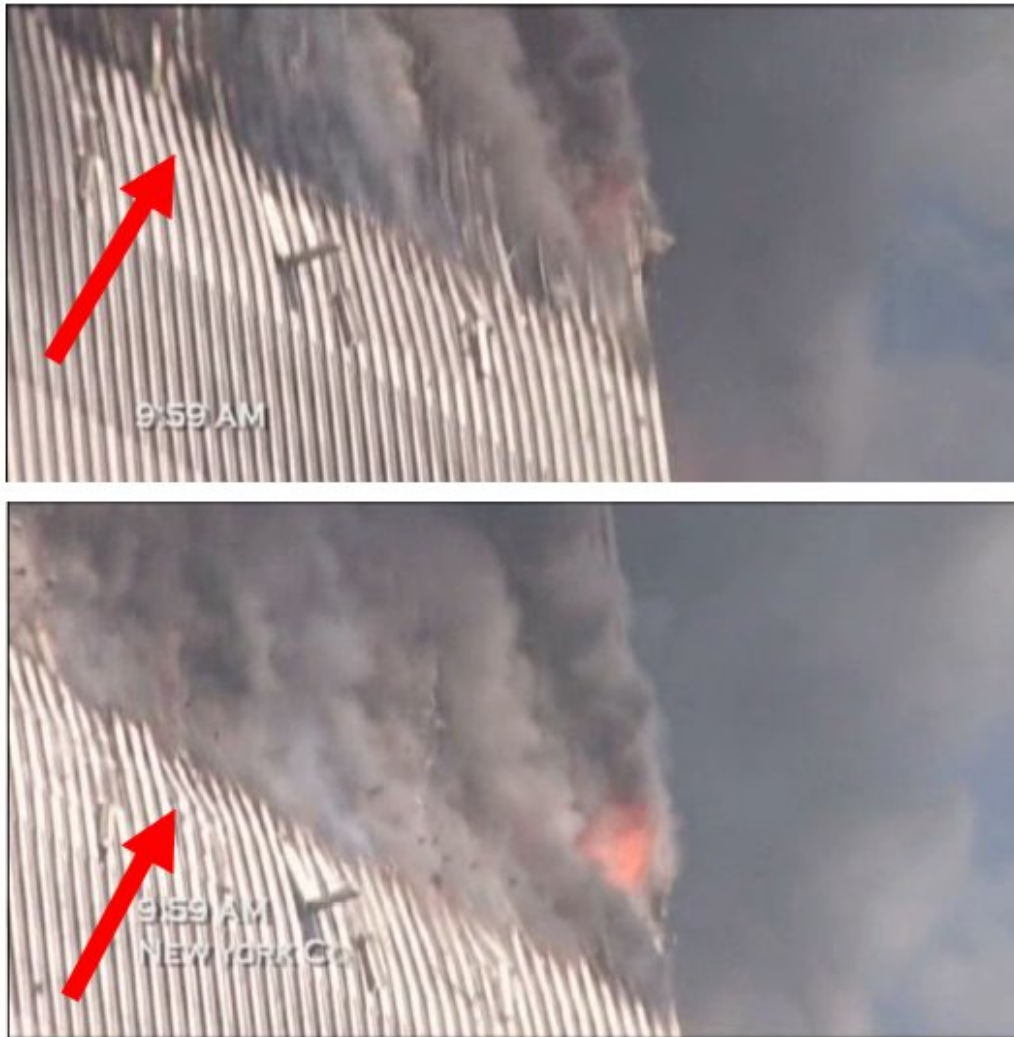
Jaede Barg: The lights in the staircase went out. There were cracks in the stairwell walls with exposed pipes breaking through the plaster. The building was forcefully swaying, enough to require significant balancing. **I recall the incredible sound of twisting metal with each sway of the building.** [Source](#)

North Tower bowing that led to collapse



South Tower bowing that led to collapse. This bowing was visible within 18 minutes of flight 175's impact.

South Tower Collapse Sequence 9:59 am



[Next: Timing of explosions](#)

Comparison of witness accounts to Rodriguez story: Time between impact, initial jet fuel explosions, and secondary explosions

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In the next three pages I will present accounts from witnesses on many different floors in the towers that bear similarities – sometimes strikingly so – to what William Rodriguez experienced on the B1 level of the north tower. None of these people claim that bombs were responsible for what they experienced.

The person who describes the longest delay between feeling the building move and experiencing an explosion was in the B4 basement level. He did not hear the aircraft impact.

The sequence of events in both towers, as described by the official investigations and as we can partially piece together from these accounts, is as follows:

- 1) Aircraft impact, often described as sounding like a dull thud or a "whump," with a moderate vibration of the building. The aircraft, traveling at very high speeds, cut through the building exteriors easily. The buildings began to sway appreciably after they had absorbed and decelerated the majority of the aircraft mass.
- 2) After approximately one or two seconds, a strong explosion, often described as a bang or a boom, from jet fuel igniting at the impact zone, accompanied by a strong vibration and damage to windows, walls, ceilings, etc.
- 3) A fireball traveling down multiple elevator and ventilation shafts bursting onto floors near the impact zones.
- 4) Swaying back and forth of the building, strong enough to make people lose their balance, lasting 10 seconds or so. Many people thought the building would collapse at this point. The building movement caused further damage to walls, floors, and ceilings. Some people described the building "torquing" (twisting).
- 5) Some elevators freefalling in their shafts, some elevators near the impact zones trailing or surrounded by jet fuel, causing major damage from impact when stopping and from overpressures from igniting fuel.
- 6) Jet fuel flowing down shaftways and igniting on lower floors several seconds (up to 30 by one account) after the aircraft impacts.

This sequence would seem to fit Arturo Griffith's #50 freight elevator experience: impact from above → elevator falling → damage from elevator stopping (doors buckling inward, injuring his legs) → heavy smoke (possibly pushed down by initial blast, possibly drawn down by falling elevator, or both → fireball coming down shaft.

The following accounts also appear in the "Inside the towers" sections of this document.

North Tower

(Three floors below NT impact, first no movement, then the whiplash.)

The plane ripped a path across floors 94 to 98, directly into the office of Marsh & McLennan Companies, shredding steel columns, wallboard, filing cabinets and computer-laden desks. Its fuel ignited and incinerated everything in its way. The plane's landing gear hurtled through the south side of the building, winding up on Rector Street, five blocks away.

Just three floors below the impact zone, not a thing budged in Steve McIntyre's office. Not the slate paperweight shaped like a sailing ship. Not the family snapshots propped up on a bookcase. Mr. McIntyre found himself in front of a computer that was still on.

Then came the whiplash.

A powerful shock wave quickly radiated up and down from the impact zone. The wave bounced from the top to the bottom of the tower, three or four seconds one way and then back, rocking the building like a huge boat in a storm.

"We got to get the hell out of here," yelled Greg Shark, an American Bureau of Shipping engineer and architect, who was bracing himself in the swaying while he stood outside Mr. McIntyre's office. [Source](#)

A survivor from a floor in the 80s: "The entire corridor became an inferno outside our front door. Smoke began to enter our office. There was also debris falling. ... **The fire on the corridor was at least 10 ft high, and it ran the ... good length of the corridor. Then I saw a fireball come down the elevator shaft and blew the elevator doors.** The fireball came right at me; it was a really bright color. Interview 1000055 (NIST 2004) <http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-7.pdf>

85th Floor

Corky Adams: "...85th floor of One WTC, where my company, [snip], has its offices. I begin preparing reports for another day of trading at the NYMEX,... horrific explosion. An immediate change in the air pressure. A ghostly column of air shoots like a canon into the office. The front door slams shut. Papers are whipped into the air. I'm thrown off my chair and to the ground. My boss jumps out of his office a second prior to the explosion. He had watched, in horrific disbelief, the entire event as the plane narrowly missed the empire state building and set a direct course for our

building. The explosion sends the tower shaking furiously, lurching back and forth with sickening vengeance for maybe five or ten seconds. I think we may die. The building may topple over, or crumble. Finally it stops. The building is still standing. Everybody stares at each other, no idea of what happened or what to say. Speculations about an explosion, a bomb. No, it was a plane, our boss says. A commercial jet. [Source](#)

83rd floor:

Jeff Benjamin: Immediately before impact we could see images in the cockpit and the plane banked sharply. A split second later we heard an echoing shot, fell to the floor and observed a fireball followed by debris which struck the side of the building. At the same time you could feel the building sway every so slightly for a brief moment. We immediately retreated towards the main part of the office **where we noticed a huge fireball shooting out of the elevator shaft which quickly disappeared**. Fortunately, the glass door between our office and the elevator lobby remained intact as the drywall and ceiling tiles caught fire. **The fire burned off leaving thick acrid black smoke** some of which entered the office through the ceiling where some tiles had collapsed above the reception desk. [Source](#)

78th Floor NT Carmen Griffith (Wife of freight elevator operator Arturo Griffith)

Then the first plane hit. "The elevator doors closed, and I heard 'Bang! Bang!'" says Carmen. "We were trying to get the door open." With the door just half-open, Carmen squeezed out into a smoke-filled corridor. **As she looked back to tell her passengers that it was safe to exit, a plume of fire seared her face, hands and legs.**[Source](#)

Carmen Griffith again:

"They were so packed (in the elevators) — like sardines," she says.

A full elevator had just left the 78th floor, and Carmen was about to carry up six or seven stragglers. The plane struck as the doors of her elevator closed. They could hear debris smash into the top of the car; **then the elevator cracked open, and flames poured in**. Carmen jammed her fingers between the closed doors, pulled them partly open and held them as passengers clambered over and under her 5-foot-6 frame to escape.

Before finally throwing herself out onto the lobby floor, **she glanced back to be sure the elevator was empty. That was when fire scorched her face with second- and third-degree burns, and literally welded her hooped right earring to her neck. Her hands were badly burned.**

Carmen was helped down the 78 floors to an ambulance just as her husband was carried out of the basement on a piece of plywood and a hand truck, each certain — after seeing the burning buildings from the street outside — that the other was dead. [Source](#)

70th floor: Impact, then explosion

Kim King: After the plane collided with Tower One, it then exploded. **The explosion seemed to have come about 10 seconds after impact. However, things were in slow motion and my mind was now in overdrive.** I'm sure the explosion happened right after impact. The explosion was massive it only magnified the rumbling, swaying and shaking of the Tower, things began falling off my desk. It honestly felt like the floor fell at least a foot. I thought the building was collapsing right then and there. Parts of the ceiling were truly falling to the floor. I was still standing at this point and I looked out the window and I saw gigantic white chunks of debris falling to the ground from up above. I didn't know what it was and my mind couldn't even register what I was seeing. [Source](#)

77th Floor

On September 11, 2001, at about 8:48 A.M., I had just signed on to my computer at the office of the Inspector, suite 7767 at One World Trade Center. At the moment that the plane crashed into Building One, **there were two rapid explosions, most likely the plane slamming into the building and the subsequent fuel explosion.** The concussive shock knocked me from my seat onto the floor. When I rose to my feet, the building was rocking like a boat at sea. —Michael Shuhala, PAPD Detective [Source](#)page 57.

68th floor

I was nearly knocked to the floor by the impact of the first plane, which slammed into the north side of Tower One more than 20 floors above me. **I heard a loud thud, followed by an explosion.** The building felt like it swayed about 10 feet to the south. It shuddered back to the north, then shimmied back and forth. [Source](#)

40th Floor: Jolt, sway, jolt, explosion.

Brendan MacWade: At 08:48, as I was sitting in my chair, I felt a tremendous jolt. My office chair rolled in one direction and then the opposite direction. **During the sway, I could hear the grinding of concrete and steel.**

A second jolt hit as I was standing on the ramp leading down to the reception area. Again, the building leaned one way and sprang back the next. This was also accompanied by the sound of an explosion.[Source](#)

36th Floor

Kemper Insurance Co. Survivor: "The whump turns to a lingering rumble **as the plane continues to blast through the building and the fireball explodes.**"[Source](#)

34th Floor

Jimmy Loughran : "The whole building began to sway about six or seven feet each way. It was like being rocked around in a boat," he said.

"Everybody froze, we didn't know what had happened. **Then there was a massive explosion, it must have been the fuel from the plane exploding after the initial impact.**

25th floor to Lobby: Rumble, then vibration, then swaying

Christopher Ferrer: I remember this so clearly. **It started as a rumble in our seats, and then grew into vibrations from the ceiling to the floor.** It moved the building so much that our desk drawers popped open. We all stood up immediately, but couldn't move. The building was shaking from side to side, and we froze just to keep our balance. My vision was even affected. It was no different than watching some old movie that shook the camera to give the audience a sense of what was happening.

James Cutler, a 31-year-old insurance broker, was in the Akbar restaurant on the ground floor of the World Trade Center when he heard "boom, boom, boom," he recalls. **In seconds, the kitchen doors blew open, smoke and ash poured into the restaurant and the ceiling collapsed.** Mr. Cutler didn't know what had happened yet, but he found himself standing among bodies strewn across the floor. "It was mayhem," he says. [Source](#)

Lobby

There was a very strong thud, and the chandeliers shook. **And then there was a second thud or explosion,** and more chandeliers shook, the lights flickered, and our group, which was about 175 people, stood up and ran for the exits. [Source \(audio\)](#)

Lobby

"I saw a couple of elevators in free fall; you could hear them whizzing down and as they crashed, there was this huge explosion, like a fireball exploding out of the bank of elevators," Kravette said. "People were engulfed in flames." [Source](#)

4th Sub-basement: blast 30 seconds after impact.

Edward McCabe: I was in the refrigeration plant in tower 1 sub basement 4. **I was passing through when I felt a slight shifting of the building. I froze right where I stood and listened....nothing.. about 30 seconds past (sic) and to my left about 30 feet from me was a stairway leading up to a door. this door explodes off its hinges and white smoke came into the plant. I later on found out the reason there was an explosion was the jet fuel filled the elevator shaft and seconds later a spark triggered an explosion.**

South Tower

South tower, 84th floor. Brian Clark:

There was sort of like a double noise, like a bang, thump. With the second thump everything just fell apart in our room. The first noise was the impact; the second noise was the explosion and the shock wave of the fuel igniting. [Source](#)

South tower 68th Floor, Charles Caraher

...I started to leave a message and as I did so, the building jolted. The force of it tossed me around my cubicle. I remember thinking, "Finish the message or Catherine will worry." I finished it as quickly as I could. Later that day, I would learn what I said. I said: "Catherine, this is Chaaa-arr-rll-lie. I want to come see you. I want to hold you. And then I want to go home." But at that moment in time, I didn't know what I was saying. I was trying to process what was happening around me. Once again I heard a "whoosh" surging through the ventilation ducts. **This one was much, much more pronounced than the first one [that he had experienced from the north tower exterior fireball]. It also sounded like large pieces of furniture were being moved across the floor above me.** [Source](#) (Rodriguez, on September 11, 2001: "I was in the basement, which is the support floor for the maintenance company, and we hear like a big rumble. Not like an impact, like a rumble, **like moving furniture in a massive way.** And all of sudden we hear another rumble, and a guy comes running, running into our office, and all of skin was off his body. All of the skin.")_

South Tower 52nd floor

A gigantic blast of hot air shot **up** the stairwell with the vacuum created by the blast and the chaos **returned** in a hellish instant. [Source](#)

South tower lobby, An Elevator Engineer:

As I turned around to go back toward the core of the building in the lobby, the second plane hit, and that shook the building.

We heard the explosion and within a matter of seconds after that impact, I heard – and as well as everybody else heard – this noise, this increasing sound of wind. And it was getting louder and louder. It was like a bomb, not quite the sound of a bomb coming down from a bomber. It was a sound of wind increasing, a whistling sound, increasing in sound.

I'm looking from the lobby up to a mezzanine area or the second floor where they lined up all the people to go up to the rooftop, and I'm looking up expecting something, building parts to be coming down, because I wasn't quite sure what that noise was.

But I found out later, when the plane came through the building, it cut the hoist ropes, the governor ropes, of (the) 6 and 7 cars, which was the observation cars.

What we heard was 6 and 7 car free-falling from the 107th floor and they impacted the basement at B-2 Level. And that's the explosion that filled the lobby within a matter of two or three seconds, engulfed the lobby in dust, smoke.

And apparently from what I talked to with other mechanics, they saw the doors, the hatch doors blow off in the lobby level of 6 and 7 car.

... And the noise, the wind noise we heard was, you have to picture that there are two cars or cabs in a hoist length. And a hoist weighs only so big, and it's encapsulated by walls, **so as these two cars came, fell together, the air pressure underneath would cause that sound that we heard.**" [Source](#)

South tower lobby, Tilly:

What followed was unlike anything I have ever experienced, or could imagine experiencing; the only thing that comes close is the movie Die Hard. When that plane blew through upstairs the repercussions only took about 25 seconds, but it all seemed in slow motion to me, as if I was watching myself on a movie screen. **All of the oxygen was sucked out of the building and my lungs (like being in a vacuum).** I felt doomed because the turnstile exiting the elevator bank would not unlock for me to get out and run for the revolving doors leading out of the lobby and into the mall under the plaza level. I could not have known at that panic-filled moment, but that locked-up turnstile would save my life. Instead I'm thinking, "This is where I will die," **because I can hear an explosion roaring downward inside the building.** Yet somehow I looked over to see that the end turnstile wraps around a support beam forming about a two-square-foot space, but there is only about six inches to squeeze through between the end of the turnstile and wall beam. Something inside me told me to get in there. I'm about 100 pounds soaking wet, so I pressed myself through and balled up facing the support beam with the steel barrier wrapped around my back giving me a little protected cubby hole.

This is when the explosion came.

It progressed down the building, breaking the windows as it went; the entire building was groaning, an unnatural, unearthly sound, much like a can squeezing, or cracking uncooked spaghetti. By the time it reached the lobby, the marble veneer was cracking and falling off the walls; the chandeliers shattered on the floors along with the plaster ceiling, and the force imploded in at about 50 mph, pulling metal, balled safety glass, and other material with it. The pipes were bursting over my head and dense materials were flying around me as if they were being pureed in a blender. In the next instant came a horrible noise and a flash of extreme heat and light blown directly over my head. I concluded later in the day that this was from the huge airplane fireball sent down the 78-110 elevator shaft that exploded out into the lobby, and blew around the walls and curled into the center vestibule where I was taking cover. ...The two officers and I were the only ones who made it out alive.

...As the debris and dust settled, water started to rain down, and black smoke began to roll through with the strong smell of jet fuel in what was left of a once beautiful lobby.[Source](#)

[Next: Comparison of Witness Accounts to Rodriguez story: Burn injuries](#)

Comparison of witness accounts to Rodriguez story: Burn injuries

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"And through it all, he now asks a simple question everybody should be asking? How could a jetliner hit 90 floors above and burn a man's arms and face to a crisp in the basement below within seconds of impact?

Rodriguez claims this was impossible and clearly demonstrates a controlled demolition brought down the WTC, saying 'Let's see them (the government) try to wiggle out of this one.'" [Source](#)

"My feeling is that explosions in the basements are what set these people on fire & wrecked the lobbies." [Source](#)

Rodriguez made an audio recording of an interview with Jose Sanchez, who was burned by the fireball on the B4 level. Note how he omits a crucial detail when quoting Sanchez in 2006:

In 2006, at the American Scholars 9/11 conference: "We were cleaning the basement from the tower of the World Trade Center. We heard something like a bomb, and the light turned off. **At the exit door there was this ball of fire that came down** and knocked us on the floor. We were hit by hot air and the room was full of smoke. At that moment I believed it was a bomb. I said, "Chino, let's get out of here." I can't get out because – his leg was wounded. I know there was an explosion, there was hot air, my hair got burned." [Source \(video\)](#)

In 2005: "It sounded like a bomb and the lights went on and off," said Sanchez in the tape recording. "We started to walk to the exit and **a huge ball of fire went through the freight elevator**. The hot air from the ball of fire dropped Chino to the floor and my hair got burned," said Sanchez in the tape recording. "The room then got full of smoke and I remember saying out loud 'I believe it was a bomb that blew up inside the building.'

"I said 'Chino, let's go we gotta get out of here.' But Chino was wounded and told me he needed help. I remember him saying that the hot air came with such force that it broke his leg. We finally went out through another exit and his leg and knee were both broken." [Source](#)

Rodriguez describes Felipe David's injuries:

"He was burned terribly," said Rodriguez. "**The skin was hanging off his hands and arms**. His injuries couldn't have come from the airplane above, but only from a massive explosion below." [Source](#)

Yet many people suffered similar burns from fireballs in the towers, and they do not claim that the source of the fireballs was anything but the aviation fuel. I've said this before and I'll keep saying it until Rodriguez understands it: if a person was close enough to a demolition charge or large high explosive to be burned by it, he or she would also be blown apart by it.* [Video of a TNT blast](#).

For a detailed analysis of the effects of different explosives on the human body, see "[Blast Injuries: Preparing for the Inevitable](#)." [Emergency Medicine Practice, Volume 8, Number 4, April, 2006](#) (pdf).

Most of the surviving victims of the flash burns in the towers were able to leave the buildings under their own power. But their burns were severe and several, including Felipe David and Harry Waizer, had to be put in induced comas in the hospital.

...Larry King: Was your face burning?

Harry Waizer: It wasn't burning. I got hit by a fireball that just -- if you can imagine a barbecue grill with too much gas, that just suddenly explodes, that's what I had. It just hit me in the face, then it was gone.

...I saw the look on many of those faces turn to sympathy or horror as they saw me. At one point I noticed a large flap of skin hanging off my arm. I did not look any further. [Source](#)

Even as people streamed down the stairs, the cracks were appearing in the walls as the building shuddered and cringed. Steam pipes burst, and at one point an elevator door burst open and a man fell out, half burned alive, his skin hanging off. People dragged him out of the elevator and helped get him out of the building to the doctors below. [Source](#)

She (Virginia DiChiara) was gradually realizing how grave her condition truly was, and beginning to feel it as well. "I'm in so much pain," she said. Schonbrun was horrified. "The skin was peeled off her arms," he says. "You knew this woman was in trouble." ... Some people were visibly shocked when they saw DiChiara, with her matted hair, singed eyebrows, beet-red face caked with soot and arms shedding skin. [Source](#) (Scroll down on that page to read about DiChiara's hospitalization and recovery.)

David Frank: I caught my first glimpse of her on the staircase above me. She was in her late 20's early 30's. She turned the corner towards us. Two or three people behind her. She walked like a zombie. Eyes straight ahead. Expressionless. Clothes burned off of half her body. Third degree burns. Skin falling off her arms, neck and face. Her blond hair caked in gray slime. Fully ambulatory. Totally in shock. What appreciation I have for shock now! [Source](#)

Frank again: About 15 minutes later, a second woman came down. It was bizarre. She looked almost the same age, height, weight, hair color, burns, emotionless expression. Shock. [Source](#)

Judith Toppin: I watched in horror as a woman I knew who worked on the 88th floor came crashing past us going down the stairs. She passed us in a flash but not fast enough for us not to notice that all of the skin on her back had been burnt off, and had rolled up to her neck like some macabre necklace. [Source](#)

Brian St. Clair: Some floors below, we all make room for some burn victims to descend past us. There are two of them. They are black from the burned jet fuel. They look numb. The first looks relatively better though he holds his arms in front in obvious pain. The second is an African American woman with blistered and almost "melted" patches on her face. A large swath of her arm looks Caucasian where her pigmented skin was burned off. Sheets of it look like they will soon follow. [Source](#)

North tower basement, Kenneth Johannemann: The elevator door flew open, and a guy stumbled out, and he was badly burned. He was a delivery guy. The skin from his wrist was hanging down past his fingertips. [Source](#)

..."The lift door exploded open. there was a man inside half burnt. His skin was hanging off. [Source](#)

"What happened was, I was down in the basement, all of sudden we heard a loud bang. And the elevator doors blew open, some guy was burnt up, so I dragged him out, his skin was all hanging off, so I dragged him out and pulled him out in the parking lot [inaudible]" [Source](#)

Doctors at the burn center said many victims suffered from serious third-degree burns. Doctors told CNN Medical Correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta that contact for just one second with something heated to 155 degrees will result in a third-degree burn.

"Doctors believed these balls of fire were up to 1,000 degrees, engulfing and literally incinerating people," Gupta said.

The burn victims now face a long and often excruciating recovery. The recovery period for burn patients is estimated as the same number of days as the percent of the body burned, Gupta said.

"So, for those that have 50 to 60 percent burns on their body, they'll probably be in the hospital for two months getting skin grafts, getting physical therapy," he said. [Source](#)

*Keep in mind that conspiracists claim the purpose of the "bomb" in the basement was to damage the massive lower level columns in the towers. Karl Koch III, whose company erected the steel for the towers, wrote in *Men of Steel* that 60% of the tower steel was in the bottom 15 stories, including the six basement levels. These were truly massive understructures. I have seen no evidence of the basement explosion causing any structural damage, much less damage to the huge core columns. As is evident in the TNT video above, high explosives produce blast damage far outside the radius of their relatively small fireballs. The larger the fireball, the larger the blast radius. Further, in order for a fireball to propagate or travel a distance such as down an elevator shaft, it needs to have fuel available for combustion for the duration of its travel. The nature of a high explosive is that its fuel is used up extremely rapidly in detonation: otherwise it would be inefficient and not a high explosive. Conspiracists are reminded to be careful of comparisons with car and truck bombs which, in addition to an explosive device, contain the liquid fuel that runs the vehicle and produces a fireball.

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Some people near the aircraft impacts didn't hear them

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William Rodriguez's conspiracy theories begin with an assumption: that while on the B1 level of the north tower he heard and felt an explosion below him before flight 11 hit the building. He assumes that the next rumbling noise he heard, which he believes came from far above, was made by the aircraft impact. Of course, like most others in the building at first he didn't know that a plane had hit the building.

An examination of the vagaries of human hearing is beyond the scope of this paper. I do think it is interesting that humans are not very good at determining the direction and distance of low frequency sounds. Audio engineers use this fact to great effect.

For the record, I have no reason to doubt that Rodriguez did hear and feel an explosion from below before hearing a noise from above. One logical explanation for what Rodriguez experienced is that he did not hear the aircraft impact and that the noise from above was made by secondary fuel explosions, elevators crashing down, etc. We know that these secondary events happened. But is it possible that Rodriguez didn't hear flight 11's impact?

I think it is not only possible, but likely. I have been in the basements of some skyscrapers. The mechanical equipment there makes them noisy places. But what I find most interesting is that some people who were near the aircraft impacts did not hear them. Others couldn't tell whether the noise came from above or below. Some people who were familiar with the towers' mechanical equipment floors assumed that the explosions originated there. Many people, especially those who had survived the 1993 bombing, assumed that a bomb was responsible. Those were all understandable assumptions. Following are a variety of descriptions that may make Rodriguez question his certainty about what happened.

North Tower

91st floor

Mike McQuaid, the electrician installing fire alarms, was sure he knew what he was feeling: an exploding transformer, from a machine room somewhere below the 91st floor. Nothing else could rock the place with such power. Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn. 102 Minutes: The Untold Story of the Fight to Survive Inside the Twin Towers. Henry Holt and Company: New York. 2005.

81st floor, didn't hear impact.

Michael Wright: "All of a sudden there was this shift of an earthquake. People ask, "Did you hear a boom?" No, the way I can best describe it is that every joint in the building jolted...we all got knocked off balance...the flex caused the marble walls in the bathroom to crack...I opened the bathroom door, looked outside, and saw fire...The doorjamb had folded in on itself and sealed the door shut...There was a huge crack in the floor of the hallway that was about half a football field long, and the elevator bank by my office was completely blown out. If I'd walked over, I could have looked all the way down. Chunks of material that had been part of the wall were in flames all over the floor. Smoke was everywhere." ("What We Saw: The Events of September 11 in Words, Pictures, and Video. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002. p. 72)

78th Floor

Schofield: My father had no idea what had happened. He and his co-workers were not terribly alarmed before I called. **They knew something had happened, for they felt the building shake a bit.** [Source](#)

77th Floor:

Sue Frederick: When the plane struck the building it felt exactly like an earthquake. The only advanced sound was a large windful swoosh. At first we had no idea if it was a bomb or the building had been struck. [Source](#)

72nd Floor

Frank Lombardi, Port Authority Chief Engineer

Lombardi was at his desk. He heard nothing, but felt the tower sway, and saw people in the hallway go airborne before they fell. His first thought was that New York was experiencing an earthquake. William Langewiesche. American Ground. New York: North Point Press, 2002. p.47

71st floor: "Heard a rumble"

Vincent Fiori was on the 71st floor of the first tower that was hit. "I'm sitting at my computer and I heard a rumble and my chair spun around," he said. Most people weren't sure what had happened. On the street, people gazed up at the gaping, smoking hole in the building, some holding handkerchiefs over their mouths, more curious than frightened. [Source](#)

60th floor: Didn't hear Impact

"Perez is still counting his blessings since he got out of the World Trade Center just minutes before it came tumbling down. An employee of Ahasi Bank, Perez was working on the 60th floor of Tower 1, when the first of two hijacked planes hit his building. **"We didn't hear the impact,"** he said. "What we felt was it trembling. The trembling continued and the building actually started swaying." [Source](#)

55th floor: gigantic boom "right on top," violent shaking, then swaying.

ROBERT IDEISHI: Mr. Hayes went through the first few introductory slides of his presentation when suddenly we heard this extremely loud "boom". It sounded like a gigantic sonic boom was right on top of us. Then the building started to shake...violently!! I don't know how long the shaking lasted but it seemed like it was at least five seconds. Knowing I was the only other person from California, Mr. Hayes looked at me and said, "Feels like a big earthquake doesn't it?" I didn't know what it was but I said, "yeah" anyway. Then the building started to sway...A LOT! It seemed to sway once to our left and then once, WAY to the right. When it swayed right it felt, for an instant, that there was a possibility that the building could tip over. [Source](#)

50th Floor Elevator, with Demczur, didn't know about explosion

George S. Phoenix III: The elevator started moving. Suddenly it stopped and banged violently from side to side. The lights were still on. We pushed the emergency call button to call for help. **As far as we were concerned, the only thing that happened was that the elevator had stopped.**[Source](#)

40th floor

Yin Liang: At around 8:46 AM, when I am still reading and writing emails in front of my computer, I heard a low-pitched "Bom" noise, it's not very loud, then the floors starts moving, it swings back and forth slowly, like floating in the air, then the swing gradually stopped. [Source](#)

35th floor

Kemper Insurance executive Susan Doyle was in an colleague's 35th-floor office in the North Tower of the World Trade Center on Tuesday morning when the building began to shudder. The jolt was so strong that the tower "felt like it might fall over," she recalls. Her first instinct, in fact, was that it was an earthquake. But then, she and others peered out the windows and noticed that the rest of lower Manhattan looked normal. And that's when it dawned on them: "Whatever had happened had happened just to us. We all looked at one another and knew we needed to get out." [Source](#)

28th Floor: felt shaking before hearing. Didn't hear explosion.

Julie Anderson, 33, manager of public affairs, was in her office on the 28th floor, talking with a co-worker, when they felt the building shake, then heard a "screechy sound," presumably of metal grinding. [Source](#)

8th Floor: Felt a couple of shudders

Richard P. Stearns: I was in a windowless sealed server room lab at the core of the 8th floor, and in all the din of the machines all I felt were a couple judders.

No fire alarms, no alarms of any kind (six months ago there had been a fire on the escalators and no alarms then either). Since construction was going on and large bangs were common and I worked on.

When I stepped out, the floor was empty (it was by now somewhere after 9am). I went to the lifts and they were not working, my heart started to race as I found the fire escape. It was filled with smoke and panicked people still trying to get out. Joining them we eventually made it into the atrium and onto the street outside. [Source](#)

Lobby

At 8:48 a.m., Sept. 11, Capps was in a business meeting in a restaurant on the first floor of Tower 1 in the World Trade Center complex. He didn't hear an explosion, but when the chandelier above him began to shake, he was reminded of the earthquake he experienced in San Francisco eight years ago. [Source](#)

But also in a restaurant in the north tower's ground floor was James Cutler:

1st Floor James Cutler, a 31-year-old insurance broker, was in the Akbar restaurant on the ground floor of the World Trade Center when he heard "boom, boom, boom," he recalls. In seconds, the kitchen doors blew open, smoke and ash poured into the restaurant and the ceiling collapsed. Mr. Cutler didn't know what had happened yet, but he found himself standing among bodies strewn across the floor. "It was mayhem," he says. [Source](#)

South Tower

Brian Clark was on the 84th floor when flight 175 hit just below:

"It wasn't a huge explosion. It was something muffled, no flames, no smoke, but the room fell apart as the plane kind of torqued the building. Ceiling tiles fell from the ceiling, air conditioning ducts fell, door frames fell out of the wall. (Richard Bernstein. Out of the Blue. New York. Times Books, 2002. p. 222)

68th floor

Charles Caraher and Catherine Balkin: I started to leave a message and as I did so, the building jolted. ...I was trying to process what was happening around me. **Once again I heard a "whoosh" surging through the ventilation ducts. This one was much, much more pronounced than the first one. It also sounded like large pieces of furniture were being moved across the floor above me.**

62ndth Floor: Didn't hear anything.

Daniel T. Duffy: **I heard no sound - no crash, no explosion, no screams**, but I felt that fortress of steel and glass wobble back and forth like it was a cheap card table, nearly knocking me off my feet. It felt for a moment as if the entire building would go toppling over onto Church Street. [Source](#)

53rd floor

Jack Alvo: I felt the impact of the explosion that **I believed was at my feet**. I heard the crashing glass around me as the building rocked. My hands began to shake and my knees buckled. I knew I could not stay where I was and I had to go lower. I made my way to the stairs, passing people along the way. I saw the horror and the fear in several faces as I went by them. **I still believed the impact was at my feet** and as I descended past floor 50 and floor 40 I was sure I was going to see disaster. [Source](#)

Middle floors, on impact of flight 175

I was not sure if there was another plane or a bomb and furthermore **did not know if the fire and explosion was above or below me**. All I did know was that It was getting very hot and I could smell the fire and see smoke coming up the stairwell. [Source](#)

44th Floor Sky Lobby

James Kazalis: As I took a few steps towards someone I recognized, some great force struck my building. **It felt like the floor was being violently pushed under my feet**. While falling to the floor, the steady repeating rhythm of time suddenly stopped. I instantly developed tunnel vision and my depth perception did not extend beyond twenty feet. My eyes focused on a nearby out-of-service elevator. The impact had created a shock wave through the entire building that forced dust at a high velocity from all four sides of the elevator doors to the inside of the lobby. I was now prone on the floor. Pandemonium erupted and filled the sky lobby. lobby. [Source](#)

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This summary is based **only** on the accounts I compiled for this paper. That compilation is a sample only and should not be taken as comprehensive. These lists do not include some similar statistics such as those in [NIST NCSTAR 1-7](#) (Occupant Behavior, Egress, and Emergency Communication) or [NIST NCSTAR 1-5](#) (Reconstruction of the Fires in the World Trade Center Towers). I haven't updated this list since compiling several more accounts.

Bold floor numbers indicate multiple reports.

64 people on 43 levels below the impact zones reported smelling or contacting jet fuel/kerosene on these floors

North Tower: 87, **85, 83**, 81, **78, 63**, 62, 60, 57, **53**, 52, 47, 46, **40**, 39, 36, 35, 34, **33**, 29, **27, 25**, 13, 12, 9, 7, **6**, 5, 4, 3, **Plaza level, Concourse**, B1, B6, and one unknown floor.

South Tower: 75, 74, 68, 61, 40, 25, Plaza Level, Concourse.

33 people on 18 levels below the impact zones reported seeing fireballs coming from elevator shafts or down hallways

North Tower: 91, 88, **85, 83**, 82, 81, **78**, 77, 7, **Plaza Level, Concourse**, B1, B4, Basement (unknown level).

South Tower: 75, 70, **Plaza level**, Concourse.

29 people on 19 levels below the impact zones described fires on these floors

North Tower: **89**, 88, **85, 83, 81**, 78, 77, 72, 53, 46, **45**, 22, 4, **Plaza level**, Concourse, **Unknown upper levels**.

South Tower: 50, Concourse.

49 people on 23 levels below the impact zones reported seeing elevators/shaft doors blown out or severely damaged.

North Tower: 89, 88, 86, 85, **83**, 82, 81, 78, 77, 45, **22, 3, Plaza Level, Concourse, B1**, B4, **Basement** (unknown levels).

South Tower: **78**, 74, 44, Concourse, one unknown level.

8 people on 4 levels below the impact zones were burned in elevators and survived (does not include ST 78th floor)

North Tower: **78**, Concourse, B1.

South Tower: Concourse.

14 people on 9 levels below the impact zones survived burns or other injuries from blasts from elevator shafts

North Tower: 89, 88, 85, 83, 78, **Concourse**, B1, B4, B6.

26 people on 17 levels below the impact zones reported fallen elevators (11 were in the elevators and survived).

North Tower: 91, **88, 78**, 47, 42, 27, 15, 7, **Concourse, B1**, B4, **Basement** (unknown level), **Unknown upper levels**.

South Tower: 19, 12, Concourse.

13 (non-deaf) people on 12 levels below the impact zone didn't hear the aircraft impact/explosion on their building

North Tower: 88, 81, 72, 62, 60, 50, 35, **34**, 28, 8, Concourse, B6.

50 people on 31 levels below the impact zones described significant secondary damage (walls down, doors jammed, broken pipes, stairwells disintegrating, etc. Not intended to suggest structural damage.)

North Tower: **88**, 85, 83, 82, 81, **78**, 77, 76, 74, 72, 71, 68, 63, 40, 30, 29, 22, 21, **Plaza level, Concourse, B1, B4**, B6, Basement (level unknown)

South Tower: 76, 70, 68, 67, 40, Plaza level, Concourse.

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"A jet fuel fireball erupted upon impact and shot down at least one bank of elevators. The fireball exploded onto numerous lower floors, including the 77th and 22nd; the West Street lobby level; and the B4 level, four stories below ground."– 9/11 Commission Report, P. 285

"The line between life and death that morning was as straight as a steel beam. Everyone on the 92nd floor died. Everyone on the 91st floor lived." [Source](#)

Below: NIST computer model of building layout in north tower impact zone.

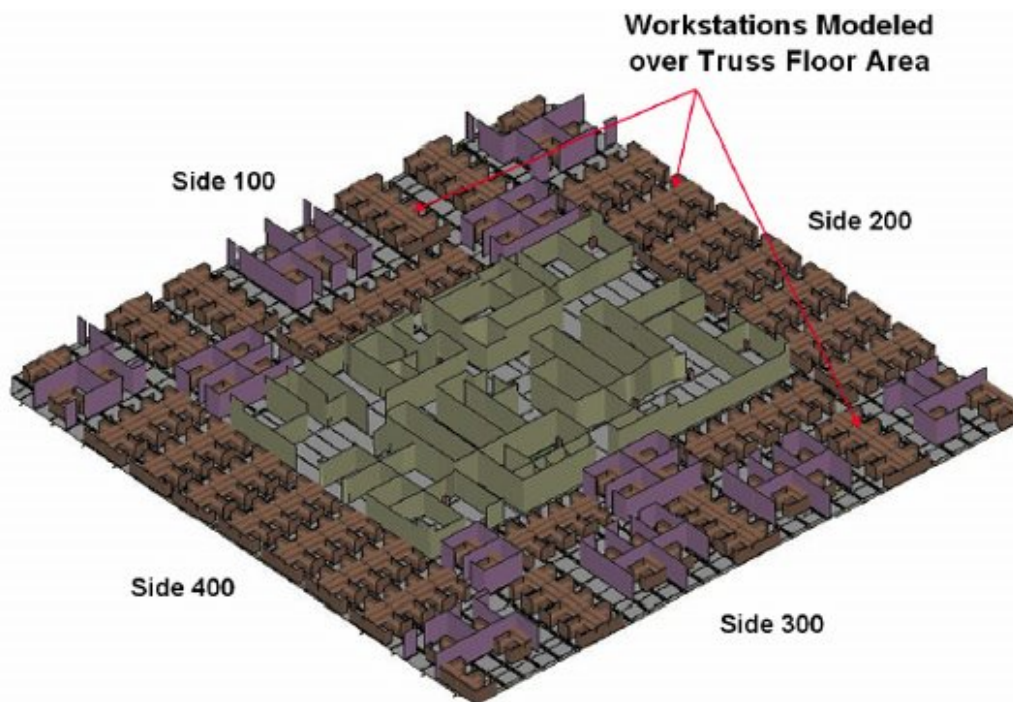


Figure 6–7. Model of the 96th floor of WTC 1, including interior contents and partitions.

Below: Typical tower office floor. Building core with elevators is at top right.



Below: Typical tower trading floor



91st floor

Gerry Wertz: "She was stepping off the elevator when the plane hit," Wertz recalls. "There was an explosion on top of the elevator as if someone had thrown a hand grenade. I jumped out, fell to the floor and looked behind me. I saw the elevator disintegrate in a ball of flames and fall down (the shaft). There was a big hole in the ceiling above the elevator. I saw the cables fold up as if they'd become detached. It took no more than two seconds." http://www.usatoday.com/news/sept11/2002-09-04-elevator-usat_x.htm

That empty elevator probably plummeted 14 floors into a pit on the 77th floor. Wertz and Lawrence evacuated safely down the stairs, as did 18 other people from the 91st floor.

91st floor:

Mike McQuaid: I was talking to someone from American Bureau of Shipping [also on 91st floor]. I hear this explosion, like a transformer below. What the hell was that? The whole place shook. The hallway started filling up with smoke. I started screaming for the rest of my crew to come out. One of them emerged with a cut on his head. He says he got knocked out, and the smoke woke him up. This guy later died in the hospital, some two months later, but he seemed fine at the time. We went to the stairwell. It was the one across from the men's room on 91. The northwest stairwell. One of my crew went back for his phone. I yelled into the offices of American Bureau of Shipping. Is anybody else in there? A woman with a red hat came out and said, "I'm the last one out." We went out and into the stairwell. The first thing I noticed was that no one was coming down the stairs. I also noticed the Sheetrock on the interior of the stairwell on his floor had been knocked off the walls so thoroughly that the steel behind it was showing. The walls are made of four or five sheets of 5/8 inch Sheetrock, which I think is quite strong. The stairwell was dark black and it looked like it was blocked above me, although I can't see much because of the dark. "Accounts From the North Tower" *The New York Times*, May 26, 2002

Mike McQuaid, the electrician installing fire alarms, was sure he knew what he was feeling: an exploding transformer, from a machine room somewhere below the 91st floor. Nothing else could rock the place with such power.

Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn. 102 Minutes: The Untold Story of the Fight to Survive inside the Twin Towers. Henry Holt and Company: New York. 2005.

90th floor

Male Caller, suite 9051: I've got five people here. We can't get out. PA Transcript WTC Ch. 10, Police Desk, suite 3541 Right (P. 9)

89th floor

The public corridor was filling with smoke and flames. "The floor was actually melting," Mr. Sibarium said.

Rick Bryan, a lawyer who works at MetLife, actually found an extinguisher and tried to douse a fire in the elevator shaft, then realized the futility. "We were doomed," he said. "We had only minutes."

"Fresh Glimpse in 9/11 Files of the Struggle for Survival" *New York Times*, August 29, 2003 By Jim Dwyer

88th floor or below

Mr. De Martini was next heard from about a half-hour after the plane hit, perhaps 10 minutes after the people on the 89th floor were freed. He does not identify himself by name, but by his job title, construction manager. "Construction manager to base, be advised that the express elevators are in danger of collapse. Do you read?" Only his end of the conversation is recorded. A few minutes later, he returns with another message: "Relay, that, Chris, to the firemen that the elevators — " •

• There is an interruption in the transmission. •

"Express elevators are going to collapse."

"Fresh Glimpse in 9/11 Files of the Struggle for Survival" *New York Times*, August 29, 2003 By Jim Dwyer

88th floor

At 8:46, when the first plane struck the north tower between the 94th and 99th floors, few on the 88th or 89th floor realized what had happened, but the building swayed so far that they knew something serious had taken place. Anita Serpe, a principal administrator who worked for Mr. De Martini, said she ran back to her office and changed into socks and sneakers. Smoke and fire broke out at one end of the floor. A woman who worked on the floor was badly burned near the elevator bank. Gerry Gaeta, a member of Mr. De Martini's staff, said, "To say the least, it was chaos."

"Fresh Glimpse in 9/11 Files of the Struggle for Survival" *New York Times*, August 29, 2003 By Jim Dwyer

88th floor

"Now, a few seconds after the plane's impact, Elaine Duch, a member of the Port Authority staff, wandered the 88th floor, dazed, charred, her clothes nearly burnt off her. She had been getting off the elevator when the fireball of fuel blew through the shaft, the flames shooting out of any opening to gulp oxygen. The ceilings had collapsed in the hallways. Out of their offices and cubicles, men

and women were swarming. Where the elevators had been were now two gaping holes..."

Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn. 102 Minutes: The Untold Story of the Fight to Survive inside the Twin Towers. Henry Holt and Company: New York. 2005.

88th floor

"Roz": ...an explosion of great magnitude blew off the entrance door through which I had just previously walked. It knocked us both down in her cubicle. http://www.servenyc.org/survivor_stories.htm

88th floor

In the Management Office on the 88th floor, the scope of the catastrophe was more evident. John Griffin Jr. and Charlie Magee also thought at first that an electrical substation had blown up. The force of the explosion lifted furnishing into the air. One desk had flown up and landed five feet away. The falling debris and furnishings blocked access to the stairwells. The room began to fill with smoke. John, Charlie and others began to break out windows to get air into the room. <http://www.chiefengineer.org/article.cfm?seqnum1=1029>

88th floor

By the time Reiss had run up one flight on the escalator, he guessed that a truck bomb must have blown up somewhere around the trade center.

Reiss no longer worked in the basement, as he had in 1993, and he wondered, fleetingly, who in his old department had arrived for work on the 88th floor of the north tower. Up there, no one had illusions about a truck bomb. The moment arrived as a powerful fist rocking the building. As soon as Gerry Gaeta, a member of the team that oversaw construction projects at the trade center, could find his words, he hollered, "It's a bomb, let's get out of here." And he was sure he knew how it had gotten up there. Moments earlier, a messenger had arrived with a trolley of documents for Jim Connors in the real estate department. Surely that was how the bomb had been wheeled in, Gaeta thought; the boxes of "documents" had been a Trojan horse.

Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn. 102 Minutes: The Untold Story of the Fight to Survive inside the Twin Towers. Henry Holt and Company: New York. 2005.

88th floor

The walls around the elevators had vanished. The men's bathroom had disappeared. "Fresh Glimpse in 9/11 Files of the Struggle for Survival" New York Times, August 29, 2003

88th floor

Daria Coard was at work in Building 1 of the World Trade Center when the first plane hit. She was in an elevator with 30 other people on the 88th floor. Only nine passengers managed to exit the elevator before it fell down the shaft. Daria does not know if the elevator stopped on a lower floor or what might have happened to the others. <http://911digitalarchive.org/seiu/details/55>

87th floor: Jet fuel on floor

It was pandemonium and total confusion for the occupants and visitors on the 87th floor. Bright white smoke was filling the hallways and liquid sparks were snaking along the floor – the jet fuel that had not exploded. <http://brainmind.com/AmericaAttacked1.html>

87th floor

Not everyone who left the 88th floor got out alive. Two other Port Authority employees, Carlos Da Costa and Peter Negron, are heard on the radio, talking about a stuck elevator on the 87th floor.

Accounts from the North Tower. The New York Times, May 26, 2002. Interview by Jim Dwyer

87th- 85th floors: heavy white smoke

Adam Mayblum: 87: We checked the halls. The smoke was thick and white and did not smell like I imagined smoke should smell. ...On the 85th floor a brave associate of mine and I headed back up to our office to drag out my partner who stayed behind. There was no air, just white smoke.

http://www.greatdreams.com/trade_day9.htm

86th floor

"The explosion on the 86th floor seemed to come from the inside out, rather than the outside in," said Mr. Gartenberg, 35, of Manhattan. "That's why the core of the building is as damaged as it is. The fire door is blocked. It either closed from the force of the explosion or as a fire precaution. The elevators are completely blown out." http://www.mishalov.com/wtc_northtower.html

86th floor:

"It looked like the explosion came up through the elevator," said Ms. Puma, 33, of Staten Island. "It looks like the firewall came down and I believe the stairs are on the other side of it." Accounts from the North Tower. The New York Times, May 26, 2002. Interview by Jim Dwyer

85th floor

Elliot Nadel: The elevators looked like the doors had almost blown open, and there was a lot of construction from the ceiling and the walls that had just kind of collapsed in.

http://www.ny1.com/pages/RRR/911special_survivors.html

85th floor

"Marvin W. Pickrum,...85th floor inside Tower One....It felt like the building leaned, like standing with your back to the waves in the ocean."

"...SMW Trading Company. He still didn't know what was going on outside when his knees suddenly buckled. He only saw the clear blue skies out the window.

"But when I turned around all I saw was the fire and smoke," he recalled. "I saw a silhouette of my own body and my arms were splayed. I got a full breath of air, then..." <http://4bypass.com/archives/nov%2D01.htm>

85th floor

"...Jareau Almeyda, was in his office on the 85th floor of Tower One...sudden swoosh, like that of a rocket and then a large explosion.

The building shook like it was going to collapse. We ran to the center of the office away from the windows. At the same time, we glimpsed out the window. There was fire, debris, and smoke coming from the floors above us. We looked at each other in amazement. I'll never forget the look on my friend Tim's face. We ran back to grab our stuff and leave the building....

"Before even seeing the conditions in the hallway, we knew we were going to take the stairs. As we grabbed our stuff and a man came running into our office screaming for the exit. Standing at our entrance, he was hysterical. Later I found out he was in the bathroom when the plane hit. I told him to calm down, that I knew where the exit was and to follow us. Our office had double doors. The left one tightly secured, and the right one locked by a security magnet. Both doors were blown open by the impact. Interestingly, the left door was the one I noticed was open. I never saw that door open; it was always securely shut.

"The nearest exit was to the left, right before our office. As I rushed towards the door, I noticed the hallway was dark and there was a very strong smell of smoke and burnt fuel. <http://www.salsationonline.com/jareau.htm>

85th floor

Timothy Snyder and two other employees of Thermo Electron were in their 85th floor office in the North Tower of the World Trade Center when the plane hit three floors above them. They didn't know it was a plane; Mr. Snyder believed it was a bomb.

"We were just working," he says. "All of a sudden, we heard this slamming sound that was so loud. The debris started falling outside the windows, and the door to the office blew open. The building started swaying, and it was hard to say if the building would remain standing. I was in my chair, and I just grabbed onto my desk.

"After five or 10 seconds, the building stopped moving, and we knew we had to leave. We all grabbed our bags and headed out." They walked down to the 78th floor where they were guided to another stairwell, crossing a lobby with a bank of elevators. The marble walls of the lobby were buckled. <http://www.asne.org/index.cfm?ID=3426>

85th floor

Corky Adams: I begin preparing reports for another day of trading at the NYMEX,... horrific explosion. An immediate change in the air pressure. A ghostly column of air shoots like a canon into the office. The front door slams shut. Papers are whipped into the air. I'm thrown off my chair and to the ground. My boss jumps out of his office a second prior to the explosion. He had watched, in horrific disbelief, the entire event as the plane narrowly missed the empire state building and set a direct course for our building. The explosion sends the tower shaking furiously, lurching back and forth with sickening vengeance for maybe five or ten seconds. I think we may die. The building may topple over, or crumble. Finally it stops. The building is still standing. Everybody stares at each other, no idea of what happened or what to say. Speculations about an explosion, a bomb. No, it was a plane, our boss says. A commercial jet.

"{Losing track of time}: I immediately walk to the door. Someone screams not to open the door; the hallway is on fire. Curious, R--- and I touch the door and the handle. It s cool. I open the door, slowly, cautiously, to see what s out there. It s pitch black out there, except for the office light, still on, shining off of the billowing smoke in the hall. The smell is horrible. This is no ordinary smoke. It smells of metal, jet fuel, of rancid concrete, of things unspeakable. I close the door. People are still numb, shocked, confused. O--- was the first to say it; he was getting the hell outta there. I'm with you man. I open the door again. The smoke is thinner. I see an orange glow outside the door, a fire smoldering around the corner. I hear guys in another office yelling for help or something, too scared to open their door. Nobody knows where the stairs are, not even them.

"Back into the office, to grab some stuff. The black [---] jacket I wear to the trading floor. It s full of pick cards, order tickets, my empty water bottle, Ice gum, a calculator, a pen, a halls cough drop, and trading analyzers. I put on my jacket. I decide to fill up my water bottle. O--- waits for me, ready to bolt. Almost everybody wants to leave now.

"M---!. Where is he? When did he leave? Where did he go? Is he in the bathroom? The bathroom! Someone check the bathroom. I walk into the hallway, inhaling the noxious stench, and I walk down the hall. To the left, another hallway, three small fires burning, debris everywhere, lights out. In front of me, another office, another man peering out, more terrified people. To the right, another hallway, the bathroom, and the stairwell. I open the bathroom door, everything in pristine condition. Like nothing happened. I call out for M---, no answer. He's not in the bathroom. We head down the stairs.

"We move fast. Not a lot of people in the stairs yet. At 81, O--- stops to help some guy break out some fire extinguishers. We each grab an extinguisher. We get to 72. People are coming back up the stairs. What's the problem? The door several platforms down is pinned shut.

People come back upstairs from below. We walk out into the hall to find another stairwell. This floor had damage. Wires and debris everywhere. A wall blown down into the hallway. Some fires smoldering in the rubble. I cover my face and try not to look. Afraid of another explosion. We find another stairwell at the other end of the hall. <http://www.cyberspaceorbit.com/wrdtwrsq.htm>

83rd floor

Allen ran computer operations at Lava Trading, on the 83rd floor of the North Tower. Allen was also a licensed pilot and a ham radio operator. When he saw a plane flying low south along the Hudson River about 8:45 AM, he was surprised, but supposed that it was approaching Newark Airport. A moment later, however, he noticed the familiar sound of a pilot gunning the aircraft's engine, then heard a roar as the plane hit the building thirteen floors above him. The building started shuddering, debris began falling, and fires fed by cascading airplane fuel broke out. <http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/s8136.html>

83rd Floor

Female caller, suite 8327: The window has blown...broken, um...it's in pieces now. PA Transcript, WTC Ch. 10, Police Desk, 3541 Right (P. 6)

83rd floor: saw plane from 3-4 miles out, describes approach until impact, firefighters made it up to the 83rd floor?

My name is Jeff Benjamin and I was visiting a client, Axcelera Specialty Risk, on the 83rd floor of the North Tower when we observed an approaching aircraft (American Airlines Flt.11)from a distance of aprox. 3-4 miles. At the time we initially spotted the plane, it appeared to be level with us. We could distinctly identify the American airlines insignia and my client commented that perhaps the plane had taken off from Kennedy and was experiencing mechanical problems. As the plane approached us it seemed to climb. I stood up from the conference table and walked over to the window assuming as everyone did that there was no imminent danger. As the plane

came closer we could see that it was traveling at a high rate of speed and the sound of the engines intensified. Immediately before impact we could see images in the cockpit and the plane banked sharply. A split second later we heard an echoing shot, fell to the floor and observed a fireball followed by debris which struck the side of the building. At the same time you could feel the building sway every so slightly for a brief moment. We immediately retreated towards the main part of the office where we noticed a huge fireball shooting out of the elevator shaft which quickly disappeared. Fortunately, the glass door between our office and the elevator lobby remained intact as the drywall and ceiling tiles caught fire. The fire burned off leaving thick acrid black smoke some of which entered the office through the ceiling where some tiles had collapsed above the reception desk. We immediately went to the kitchenette in the office to locate hand towels and paper towels which we wet down in the sink to stuff under the door and to cover our mouths to prevent as much smoke as possible from entering our lungs. No one seemed to know for sure where the stairways were, and since the smoke was heavy in the elevator lobby, we decided to stay in the office for the time being. Almost as if on cue the phones began to ring. Relatives and co-workers called to provide assurance and to let us know they had contacted 911 operators and advised them there were people located on the 83rd floor that need to be rescued. I personally contacted a 911 operator and let them know our location. The operator stated we should remain in the office as they would provide our whereabouts to the firemen which were already in the building and on their way up. Shortly thereafter the phones stopped ringing. Minutes passed which seemed like hours. We closed the office doors located by the exterior windows as we were afraid some of the debris crashing against the side of the building could break some windows and physically located near the walls bordering the elevator lobby. It became eerily quiet as everyone seemed to pause in reflection. I specifically recall a woman, who entered our office from the elevator lobby immediately after impact, stating "If you think we are in bad shape you should see the South Tower". We had heard a large explosion but were not aware that it came from the South Tower. I proceeded to go to the far end of the office where I could see the South Tower. When I looked down I observed fire which totally engulfed one of the lower floors. It was the most frightening sight I had ever seen. Approx. 30 minutes had passed when we decided to attempt to escape. We exited the office holding paper towels over our face to shield us from the smoke and began to walk slowly down the hall carefully avoiding smoldering drywall and ceiling panels that had fallen. We had walked only about 20 steps when we heard an explosion in the building and the lights went out. Immediately, everyone turned around and stumbled back into the office. We waited in panicked silence staring towards the lobby. No one spoke as we stood there clutching our possessions. Five minutes passed, and then miraculously, we saw the beam of a flashlight in the lobby. We all shouted as we watched the ray of light approach the glass office door. The door opened and a fireman appeared along with a building worker. They were very calm and advised <http://911digitalarchive.org/stories/details/7639>

Jeff Benjamin of Manchester, N.H., was visiting clients on the 83rd floor of the World Trade Center when he saw the plane heading straight into the building.

"It slammed into the window," Benjamin said. "Debris spilled. I don't know how we got out of there alive. All the lights went out. We walked down the flight of stairs." http://www.staugustine.com/stories/091101/ter_012.shtml

83rd floor

(Manu) Dhingra was engulfed in a fireball from the crash of one of the hijacked planes Tuesday and suffered burns over most of his body.

Like others who were severely burned by a fire sparked by the jet fuel as the crashed planes turned the buildings into infernos, he was just beginning his work day Tuesday on the 83rd floor of the north tower, the one that was struck first.

"All of a sudden, as I was walking down the hallway and I heard a door explode and this large ball of fire just engulfed me," he said from his hospital bed at the Cornell Burn Center where all those burned in the attack are being treated. "I just froze. I didn't do anything. I just stood there." http://www.greatdreams.com/trade_day9.htm

82nd floor

"...they heard the boom. The building swayed so severely that it nearly knocked them off their feet. Pieces of the facade started raining outside the window. Patrice Yopez, a co-worker, ran in screaming that a fireball had blown out the elevators. Borst ran into the main corridor and found it destroyed...." http://www.newsday.com/ny-lisave172418919oct17_story

81st floor, didn't hear impact.

Michael Wright: "All of a sudden there was this shift of an earthquake. People ask, "Did you hear a boom?" No, the way I can best describe it is that every joint in the building jolted...we all got knocked off balance...the flex caused the marble walls in the bathroom to crack...I opened the bathroom door, looked outside, and saw fire...The doorjamb had folded in on itself and sealed the door shut...There was a huge crack in the floor of the hallway that was about half a football field long, and the elevator bank by my office was completely blown out. If I'd walked over, I could have looked all the way down. Chunks of material that had been part of the wall were in flames all over the floor. Smoke was everywhere." us to leave everything behind as we would need both hands free to hold the railings in the stairwell as water was flowing down the stairs from the sprinklers on the upper floors. I led our group of eight as we began our escape. They directed us to the stairwell where another fireman held the door open. He advised me to proceed down to the 78 floor, exit the stairway and cross the floor to another stairway which we were to follow all the way down. Initially the smoke was heavy and there was a stream of water going down the stairs. The firemen advised the smoke would lessen as we went further down which it did. As we made our way down I don't recall meeting any other people for about 30 floors. Then we began to meet firemen going up as we were going down. I would estimate that we passed about 50 firemen. Though you could see the concern on their faces, there was an air of calm about them. They continually reassured us and advised us to take a brief rest if we need one. We encountered office workers carrying their injured colleagues down the stairs. One of my colleagues gave his nitroglycerin to someone who was suffering an apparent heart attack. As we proceeded further down we encountered firemen on each of the lower floors. They had broken into soda machines and were handing out drinks to ease our parched throats. As we approached the 10th floor, we heard a loud noise. I asked a fireman what it was. As I recall, he said the 65th floor collapsed. Shortly thereafter, a rush of dust came up the stairwell and stopped everyone in their tracks. The firemen on the floor motioned us out of the stairwell and into a hallway on the floor. They advised us they were opening up another stairway from which we could exit the building. Another five minutes passed as we waited in the cramped hallway. Finally, I heard a fireman behind me say the stairway we had been in was clear. I grabbed ahold of my client and we ran down the remaining floors to the main lobby. As we exited the stairwell and proceeded to pass the security area we heard what appeared to be an interior wall or elevator shaft collapse behind us. The main lobby was almost unrecognizable. Debris covered the walls and floor and all the windows were shattered. We exited through a window onto the street where we only saw a single policeman. He directed us to go under the covered walkway over Water Street where we ran into a group of firemen. they directed us to another policeman who told us to go towards the waterfront. We ran to the waterfront and tried in vain to call our families on cellphones that were offered to us.

Within five minutes I looked up at the North Tower and noticed the antenna begin to lean. Soon the whole building began to implode. We ran up along the river but soon realized we were well away from the debris cloud. We boarded a ferry boat that had pulled up along the seawall and rode the boat back to the safety of Union Station in Hoboken where we were finally able to contact our families.. CBS News. What We Saw: The Events of September 11, 2001, in Words, Pictures, and Video. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002.

81st floor

A fellow who had been on the 81st floor told me his floor was set on fire immediately after the first plane struck. <http://brainmind.com/AmericaAttacked2.html>

81st floor

Sujo John: We all gathered together and made our way to the stairwell. The World Trade Center was designed with the elevators of the building in the center, with offices surrounding them. As we stepped out of our office, we could see flames, stoked by the jet fuel that was pouring down the shafts, shooting out of the elevators; the doors had buckled and given way. Keeping ourselves as near to the edge of the wall as we could, we passed the elevators and reached the stairwell. <http://lanternbooks.com/pdfs/spirit.06.pdf>

(Sujo) John said as he and his coworkers made their way to the stairwell, the elevator shaft at the center of the building sent "balls of fire" past their floor, where jet fuel from the main impact of the 88th floor (sic) had drained. http://badgerherald.com/news/2006/11/09/911_survivor_touts_g.php

79th floor

Female caller: Suite 7967 1 WTC. We're still up on the 79th floor. PAPD Ray Murray: All right, we're...we're getting people up there. PA Transcript, WTC Ch. 10, Police Desk, 3541 Right

80th floor, 14 floors below the impact zone:

John ``Jack" Andreacchio, victim: He just said that there was a lot of smoke. And there was heat, intense heat. Accounts from the North Tower. The New York Times, May 26, 2002. Interview by Eric Lipton

80s

"The entire corridor became an inferno outside our front door. Smoke began to enter our office. There was also debris falling. ... The fire on the corridor was at least 10 ft high, and it ran the ... good length of the corridor. Then I saw a fireball come down the elevator shaft and blew the elevator doors. The fireball came right at me; it was a really bright color." [Interview 1000055 \(NIST 2004\) http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-7.pdf](http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-7.pdf)

78th floor or above

Harry Waizer, severely burned in WTC attack, interviewed by TV host Larry King: I was on my way to work. I worked at Cantor Fitzgerald as well. I was in the elevator. I don't know exactly what floor. Somewhere between the 78th and I imagine the point of impact for the airplane. And the elevator just suddenly rocked. There was an explosion. There was flame. I was trying to beat out the flame. The elevator was plummeting and then righted itself. And then a second fireball, the second one is one that hit me in the face, but the elevator did settle down at the 78th floor. The doors opened.

...Larry King: Was your face burning?

Waizer: It wasn't burning. I got hit by a fireball that just -- if you can imagine a barbecue grill with too much gas, that just suddenly explodes, that's what I had. It just hit me in the face, then it was gone. <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0209/08/klw.00.html>

Waizer, to the 9/11 Commission: The elevator was ascending when, suddenly, I felt it rocked by an explosion, and then felt it plummeting. Orange, streaming sparks were apparent through the gaps in the doors at the sides of the elevator as the elevator scraped the walls of the shaft. The elevator burst into flame. I began to beat at the flames, burning my hands, arms and legs in the process. The flames went out, but I was hit in the face and neck by a separate fireball that came through the gap in the side of the elevator doors. The elevator came to a stop on the 78th floor, the doors opened, and I jumped out.

I began the long walk down 78 flights in the fire stairwell. I walked focused on my single mission; to get to the street and find an ambulance. I knew I was seriously hurt. The stairwell was filled with people calmly walking down, with no apparent sense of the magnitude of what had just occurred. I was shouting out to people in the stairwell, telling them I was burned, asking them to step aside so that I could get down more quickly. Faces turned toward me, sometimes with apparent annoyance at this intrusion on the orderly evacuation process. I saw the look on many of those faces turn to sympathy or horror as they saw me. At one point I noticed a large flap of skin hanging off my arm. I did not look any further.

Somewhere on the way down, I believe around the 50th floor, I met a man who appeared to be either a firefighter or Emergency Medical Technician walking up. He stopped, turned around, and walked in front of me, leading me down. We made it to the lobby and walked 2 blocks to find an empty ambulance, which took me to the Burn Center at New York Presbyterian Hospital. I stayed conscious only long enough to give them my name and my wife's phone number.

I have no memories after that until some 6 or 7 weeks later; I spent that period in a state of induced coma, but I can offer a second hand account of some of the more important personal events.

The doctors explained to Karen the nature and severity of my injuries. I was particularly at risk because the fireball in my face had seared my windpipe and lungs and I had inhaled a large amount of jet fuel, leaving me particularly prone to life threatening infections. I have since been told that my chances of survival at that moment were roughly five percent.

http://www.9-11commission.gov/hearings/hearing1/witness_waizer.htm



Harry and Karen Waizer

78th floor, 16 floors below the impact zone.

Carmen Griffith: Then the first plane hit. "The elevator doors closed, and I heard 'Bang! Bang!'" says Carmen. "We were trying to get the door open." With the door just half-open, Carmen squeezed out into a smoke-filled corridor. As she looked back to tell her passengers that it was safe to exit, a plume of fire seared her face, hands and legs. <http://www.abm.com/ilwwcm/resources/file/eb000c0fdc64a5c/Alliance-911.pdf>

...All that morning, Carmen had been carrying hundreds of passengers from the 78th-floor sky lobby to the bond-trading offices of Cantor Fitzgerald on the 101st to 105th floors and the Windows on the World restaurant above that.

"They were so packed (in the elevators) — like sardines," she says.

A full elevator had just left the 78th floor, and Carmen was about to carry up six or seven stragglers. The plane struck as the doors of her elevator closed. They could hear debris smash into the top of the car; then the elevator cracked open, and flames poured in. Carmen jammed her fingers between the closed doors, pulled them partly open and held them as passengers clambered over and under her 5-foot-6 frame to escape.

Before finally throwing herself out onto the lobby floor, she glanced back to be sure the elevator was empty. That was when fire scorched her face with second- and third-degree burns, and literally welded her hooped right earring to her neck. Her hands were badly burned.

Carmen was helped down the 78 floors to an ambulance just as her husband was carried out of the basement on a piece of plywood and a hand truck, each certain — after seeing the burning buildings from the street outside — that the other was dead. http://www.usatoday.com/life/sept11/2002-09-10-survivor-griffiths_x.htm

PAULA ZAHN, CNN ANCHOR: We've been hearing some amazing stories of survival this week in our series "Faces of Ground Zero." And Arlene Charles and Carmen Griffith worked as elevator engineers in the north tower of the Trade Center. When American Airlines flight 11 struck tower one, they were both on the 78th floor just below the impact. Carmen was badly burned, and it was Arlene who actually helped her friend to safety.

... Arlene Charles: And at the time I was standing there, I hear this explosion, the whole place was in darkness, people screaming, and oh, everything was just falling down. I don't know. Something hit me. I fell down. At the time when I look up, I see the whole place in darkness and smoke. Everything was all over the place. ...Yes, so what we did, we just keep on throwing water, her leg was on fire. Everywhere she get burned. We were throwing water on her. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0209/06/ltm.02.html>



Carmen and Arturo Griffith

78 floor

The moment Roy Bell hit the elevator button on the 78th floor of One World Trade Center to go to the 102nd floor, the first plane hit. Little did he know he was about to cheat death several times in the next 90 hair-raising minutes.

Sheets of fire shooting out of the elevator shaft enveloped him and a woman waiting for the elevator doors to open. Suddenly, the elevator dropped two feet and jammed.

Had he punched the elevator button just seconds earlier, the elevator would have carried him and the woman up to an almost certain death.

"I would have been incinerated. No one got out above the 82nd floor where the plane hit (sic). I've never seen fire like that"

... "I'm running through this fire shooting through the elevator to an office where there was no more fire. A woman was freaking out and crying because I looked like a ghost with my hair and clothes burning. People came over to me and patted me down and whacked me

to put out the flames. The skin was falling off my hands," he said. "My right hand got it good."

A fire marshal in the office promised to get Bell out as he called his wife, leaving a message that he was OK and that he loved her.

After 3 or 4 minutes, the woman he had been waiting for the elevator with came into the office severely burned. A man whom he only knew as "Avi" promised to carry the injured woman out of the building. The perilous trek down 78 flights of stairs began about 10 minutes after he left the fiery elevator. <http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,1895,1248852,00.asp>

78th floor

Jareau Almeyda: The elevator banks looked like they had exploded. The marble walls were shattered and the elevator doors were bulging out. <http://www.salsationonline.com/jareau.htm>

78th floor

Bill Bumgarner: A smell of what I thought then was gasoline filled the air. ...Into the hallway corridor headed for the elevator, central corridor. I was immediately concerned. The smoke was heavy and filled with gas (jet fuel).

Made it to the central elevator corridor. Not for a moment did we think the elevators were working. Lots of confusion. Lots of smoke. Lots of sunlight from the east window wall illuminating both. A white shirted WTC employee and a man in utility uniform where running around with rags over their mouths. I noticed that the inch thick dark green marble lining the elevator bank's walls, had buckled and snapped. Major structural damage. They won't let anyone in here for a very long time. http://www.mwoa.org/David_Frank.html

78th floor

Schofield: My father had no idea what had happened. He and his co-workers were not terribly alarmed before I called. They knew something had happened, for they felt the building shake a bit. <http://911digitalarchive.org/stories/details/254>

78th floor

A self-described workaholic, Virginia DiChiara was normally out of her house and on her way to work by 7 a.m. But the morning of September 11 was so brilliantly beautiful that DiChiara decided to dawdle. She let her two golden retrievers play in the yard, cooked herself some eggs, poured herself a cup of coffee. "I was just moseying along," she says. "I didn't feel like rushing." She left her Bloomfield, N.J., home at 7:40, a 40-minute delay that would end up saving her life.

It was a little after 8:40 when she entered the lobby of the North Tower of the World Trade Center. Together with a Cantor Fitzgerald co-worker, she rode the elevator up to the 78th floor, where she crossed a lobby to take a second elevator the rest of the way to her office on the 101st floor. The elevator door opened and she pressed the button for 101. It was 8:46 a.m.

An Escape at 1,200 Degrees

As the elevator doors closed, Flight 11 plowed into the northern face of Tower 1 some 20 floors above. The elevator went black and "bounced around like a ball," DiChiara recalls. "I remember seeing two lines shooting around the top of the elevator"—electrical cables that had come loose and were spitting current—and "everybody started screaming." In front of her was a man named Roy Bell, who later said that the sound of impact was "deafening," like someone banging a 2-by-2-foot sheet of aluminum with a hammer "six inches from your head." The right wall of the elevator car crashed into Bell, breaking several of his fingers and flinging him to the left side. Miraculously, the elevator doors remained open about a foot. Within seconds, Bell "just sprinted" out of the elevator, he recalls. "Inside was not where you wanted to be."

DiChiara had crouched down behind Bell. She saw Bell go through, and thought, "I don't hear any screaming, so I know he's not on fire... I'm outta here."

She decided to go for it. But as she gathered herself, huge blue flames—translucent teardrops of fire, a foot in diameter—began falling in a steady curtain. DiChiara dropped her bag, covered her face with her palms and squeezed through the door, her elbows pushing the black rubber guards on the elevator doors. Left behind was her Cantor co-worker. DiChiara never saw her again; at times she feels guilty that she made it out and her co-worker did not.

DiChiara was aflame when she emerged from the elevator. "I remember hearing my hair on fire," she says. (She later joked, "I must have put on some extra hair spray.") With her hands she tapped out the fire. "I got it out, I got it," she said to herself. Then, feeling something else, she looked back and saw flames rising from her shoulder. In that instant, she remembered the old lesson from grade school: stop, drop and roll. She threw herself to the carpeted floor and rolled over and over, frantically patting out the flames. "I remember getting up and just looking at myself," she says. "OK, everything's out." And then sort of laughing, almost like a hysteria, like a little giggle, like, 'Oh my God, let me do it again just in case I missed it.' I was so scared, like there was an ember on my body that was still going to go up."

DiChiara crawled some 20 feet down the hallway and sat with her back propped against a wall. She was wearing a sleeveless cotton shirt that day, and her arms and hands were seared with third-degree burns.

... The hallways were smoky, suffused with the nauseating smell of burned jet fuel, littered with debris and completely dark save for some outdoor light filtering in from windows at the end of the hall.

http://jerseyshoretoday.com/archive/day_that_changed_america.htm

78th floor and below

Interviewer Larry King: Did you smell any jet fuel?

Blind Survivor Michael Hingson: Lots, yes. There were fumes all the way down. ...We figured that a plane had hit the building because I could smell -- we all could smell jet fuel fumes. So we knew there was something going on. <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0110/28/klw.00.html>

"Blind Man And His Guide Dog Among Those Who Escaped"

The California native knew there was trouble when his 78th-floor office began rocking and he smelled jet fuel. The first thing greeting Michael Hingson and his guide dog, Roselle, was the choking stench of jet fuel wafting down the north tower of the WTC. Hingson hadn't seen what happened: The 51-year-old has been blind since birth. But it wasn't hard to figure some sort of aircraft had struck the building with tremendous force at 8:45 a.m. EDT Tuesday.

...By the time they got to about the 50th floor, United Airlines Flight 175 had slammed into the south tower of the World Trade Center, something he wouldn't know about until later. Instead, the smell of kerosene was getting stronger and soon he felt people bumping into him as Roselle, Frank and he continued downstairs. <http://www.dermamet.com/news/news-28.html>



Michael Hingson and Roselle in the World Trade Center

78th floor Sky Lobby Elevator

Operations, this is Tony Savas. I'm trapped in the elevator, and debris, water's coming in, and smoke, on the 78th floor, One World Trade Center, Car number 81-A. Can you have somebody open it up please? (Repeats it a few transmissions later). Port Authority WTC Radio Channel Y – Operations (PA 049)

77th floor

Mike Shahalan, Inspector General's Office: The elevator shafts are on fire. They're burning up, up there. ...fire in the shafts...seventy-seventh floor. We just had one little hand extinguisher, and that don't do shit. Port Authority Transcript, WTC channel 09 Police desk 3541 Center, pg. 10

77th floor

"Through the storage closet, Borst directed the people to Stairwell A. They passed two men in business suits spraying water at flames shooting out of a shaft near the ladies' room. The men remained after Finegold led the last of his group away. <http://www.newsday.com/ny-lisave172418919oct17.story>

76th floor

Myron Finegold and Vinnie Borst searched desperately with dozens of others for a way down to the street.

"The bottom of the door would open, but the top was pinned shut," Borst said "They had descended six flights when they reached a door meant to block smoke from spreading. When they pushed on it, the door moved no more than 2 inches. Part of it had wedged into the frame, blocking their escape. <http://www.newsday.com/ny-lisave172418919oct17.story>

Below 77th floor

Sue Frederick: No one from the building security or city rescue had been able to get to us at this point as the only way up or down was stairwells. All the elevators had been immediately knocked out by the flames and smoke shooting down the shafts from the explosion of the plane's fuel on impact.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/americas/2001/day_of_terror/eyewitness/5.stm

72nd floor

Frank Lombardi, Port Authority Chief Engineer

Lombardi was at his desk. He heard nothing, but felt the tower sway, and saw people in the hallway go airborne before they fell. His first thought was that New York was experiencing an earthquake. William Langewiesche. American Ground. New York: North Point Press, 2002. p.47

72nd floor

Deciding to look for Marvin in the restroom, Forney entered a dark hallway (85th floor) where he saw three smoldering fire and debris. Marvin was nowhere in sight, which led Forney to believe that he had left the building before the attack.

"Forney returned to his office and joined his co-workers as they walked down the stairwell. Several stories below, Forney and Rob each picked up a fire extinguisher and lugged them along as they kept up a slow, steady pace. On the 72nd floor, the stairwell came to a halt, and they had to go into a hall to get to another exit. The hallway had fires in the wall, wires hanging from the ceiling and debris on the floor. Forney covered his face and tried not to look. "I thought all it would take is one little spark and it would blow up in my face," Forney said. <http://www.rice.edu/projects/reno/rn/20011115/Templates/survivor.html>

71st floor: "Heard a rumble"

Vincent Fiori was on the 71st floor of the first tower that was hit. "I'm sitting at my computer and I heard a rumble and my chair spun around," he said. Most people weren't sure what had happened. On the street, people gazed up at the gaping, smoking hole in the building, some holding handkerchiefs over their mouths, more curious than frightened. <http://www.asne.org/index.cfm?ID=3426>

70th floor

Kim King: When the plane entered the World Trade Tower One, the impact was enormously overwhelming. For a couple of seconds I didn't breathe, my body was frozen, my eyes were open wide but yet I couldn't see what was happening, and my mind went totally

blank. Mentally I couldn't even begin to register what was happening. The sound of the impact was so massive; my body just trembled with fear, sadness, horror, and panic. The sound of impact was so loud I was truly disorientated. Tower One instantaneously rocked from side to side. It must have rocked at least 15 to 20 degrees in each direction, to the point that it made you loose your balance, however, it felt like my feet were glued to the floor. The floor shook so much your knees buckled, you could see the ceiling trembling above you, the windows were actually shaking and you could hear the sounds of Tower cracking apart. The cracking sounds of the Tower were dreadfully unnatural. My heart was about to beat out of my chest and my body was shaking from fear. The horrifying thing now, was that this was only the beginning of the nightmare.

After the plane collided with Tower One, it then exploded. The explosion seemed to have come about 10 seconds after impact. However, things were in slow motion and my mind was now in overdrive. I'm sure the explosion happened right after impact. The explosion was massive it only magnified the rumbling, swaying and shaking of the Tower, things began falling off my desk. It honestly felt like the floor fell at least a foot. I thought the building was collapsing right then and there. Parts of the ceiling were truly falling to the floor. I was still standing at this point and I looked out the window and I saw gigantic white chunks of debris falling to the ground from up above. I didn't know what it was and my mind couldn't even register what I was seeing. <http://www.911injured.org/Stories/kimk.htm>

68th floor

Greg Trevor: I was nearly knocked to the floor by the impact of the first plane, which slammed into the north side of Tower One more than 20 floors above me. I heard a loud thud, followed by an explosion. The building felt like it swayed about 10 feet to the south. It shuddered back to the north, then shimmied back and forth.

...Within a few minutes, we gathered the staff, threw files and notepads into our bags, and prepared to evacuate the floor. It began to fill with grainy smoke. <http://www.coping.org/911/survivor/race.htm>

64th floor Civil engineer Patrick Hoey

Finally, nearly an hour and a half after the north tower had been hit, Mr. Hoey called in again. "The smoke is getting kind of bad," he told the police desk. "We are contemplating going down the stairwell. Does that make sense?" "Fresh Glimpse in 9/11 Files of the Struggle for Survival" by Kevin Flynn New York Times, August 29, 2003

63rd floor

Paul Neal: Almost immediately after the impact, somewhat bizarrely, I smelled an overwhelming stench of aviation fuel, Jet A1 gas, which I recognized because I'm a private pilot and I'm used to airfield environments. I recall smelling it and almost instantly dismissed it as being illogical and didn't have any place in the World Trade Center. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/transcripts/2907_wtc.html

63rd floor

Kaleb Northrup: I knew immediately what it was though, because I've smelled enough different fuels burning in my life to recognize that these had to be the fumes from the burning airplane fuel, which meant if nothing else, we were perhaps at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. <http://www.kaleb-world.com/wtc/email.htm>

62nd floor

Daniel T. Duffy: I heard no sound - no crash, no explosion, no screams, but I felt that fortress of steel and glass wobble back and forth like it was a cheap card table, nearly knocking me off my feet. It felt for a moment as if the entire building would go toppling over onto Church Street.

Once I was in the stairwell I smelled that awful smell - burning jet fuel and God knows what else. It was that same horrible smell that lingered over Manhattan in the weeks and months to come.

Later, in concourse: My boss grabbed me and we descended the escalators to the ground floor and passed through the revolving doors to the shopping mall under the plaza. The mall was flooded from the sprinklers and some of the marble was coming off the walls. <http://911digitalarchive.org/stories/details/9928>

60th floor: Didn't hear Impact

"Perez is still counting his blessings since he got out of the World Trade Center just minutes before it came tumbling down. An employee of Ahasi Bank, Perez was working on the 60th floor of Tower 1, when the first of two hijacked planes hit his building. "We didn't hear the impact," he said. "What we felt was it trembling. The trembling continued and the building actually started swaying." <http://www.bronxmall.com/norwoodnews/past/092701/features/page1.html>

Probably 60's or 50's

Dharam Pal: On the 74th floor, Pal automatically took the closest stairwell, also C. Within seven or eight minutes, he smelled burning fuel. <http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/MbrSecurePDF/Journal0902HumanFactor.pdf>

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57 floor

Theresa Maria Leone: There was no smoke on the 57th, but there was a smell that I now realize was gasoline. Our staircase went down only as far as the 44th. We walked past two banks of elevators. I looked to the right and could see smoke coming out of one of them. ... I didn't know what we were going to face as we made our way down, a fireball in the stairwell, or what. http://www.poynter.org/dg.its/id.6323/content.content_view.htm

56th floor: Architect believes building was failing structurally

Architect Bob Shelton had his foot in a cast; he'd broken it falling off a curb two weeks ago. He heard the explosion of the first plane hitting the north tower from his 56th-floor office in the south tower. As he made his way down the stairwell, his building came under attack as well. "You could hear the building cracking. It sounded like when you have a bunch of spaghetti, and you break it in half to boil it." Shelton knew that what he was hearing was bad. "It was structural failure," Shelton says. "Once a building like that is off center, that's it." <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,174655-1,00.html>

53rd floor

Ladder 10, you copy that,? FDNY? 53rd floor (WTC 1) burning jet fuel. (Transcript Port Authority WTC channel 09 Police desk 3541 Center, p. 19)

Below 53rd floor

Kenton Beerman, 24, was also sending e-mail at work when an explosion rocked 1 World Trade Center, making it sway back and forth for 10 seconds.

At first, Beerman thought the building would fall into the Hudson River. Then he realized it had stopped moving and saw thousands of pieces of paper fluttering outside.

"We thought it was a bomb in the freight elevator," Beerman said, because the sound of the explosion seemed to have come from that direction.

He headed into a corridor with about 15 co-workers and made his way down the stairs from the 53rd floor. The lights were still on but the stairwell reeked of smoke and something that smelled like kerosene. Beerman and others had to step aside so people who had been burned could descend more rapidly _ and so firefighters could head up the stairs. http://www.firehouse.com/terrorist/11_APwitnesses.html

51st floor

-Yeah, this is the police desk. Did you get that message that there's burning jet fuel on the 51st floor, one World Trade Center?

-There's what burning?

-Burning Jet fuel! (Transcript Port Authority WTC Ch. 17 Fire Command, WTC 1, pg. 3)

50th floor

By the time they got to about the 50th floor, United Airlines Flight 175 had slammed into the south tower of the World Trade Center, something he wouldn't know about until later.

Instead, the smell of kerosene was getting stronger and soon he felt people bumping into him as Roselle, Frank and he continued downstairs.

The problem was, the people bumping into him were going the wrong way.

"I heard applause and was told they were firefighters," he said. "I clapped a few on the back, but I was scared for where they were going." <http://www.sabwo.org.za/brette/rette139.htm>

50th floor elevator

Before it reached its first landing, the building shook, and the elevator swung from side to side. After about 10 minutes, an announcement was made about an explosion, then went eerily quiet. Smoke entered the cabin. The passengers pried open the car doors, using Demczur's squeegee, only to be faced with a wall. They were on the 50th floor, not a stop for this elevator. <http://www.elevator-world.com/magazine/archive01/0112-005.html-ssi>

50th floor Elevator, with Demczur

George S. Phoenix III: So, I got into an elevator that serviced floors 67-74. Five other guys got in after me, the last fellow being a window washer. He was carrying his bucket of soapy water with his squeegee and his wooden extension pole. The elevator started moving. Suddenly it stopped and banged violently from side to side. The lights were still on. We pushed the emergency call button to call for help. As far as we were concerned, the only thing that happened was that the elevator had stopped. No one answered right away so we pushed the alarm button. We pried the doors open only to find a wall in front of us with "50" chalked on it. Apparently, we were stuck at the 50th floor. We closed the doors and then someone answered our calls for help and I believe said something about an explosion in the building.

Then I smelled smoke. This changed things. We had to get out. I got out my handkerchief and covered my nose and mouth. Then I remembered that it was better to wet it so I dipped it in my milk. I suggested to the others to do the same. We pried open the doors again and laid down the window-washer's pole to keep the door open. It was the perfect size. Now we started kicking the hell out of the wall in front of us. It was no use. It was sheetrock, a.k.a. plasterboard or drywall, in 2 feet wide sections with a steel frame around it. It

hardly moved. We would have to dig through it. <http://www.littlewhitedog.com/content-16.html>

47th floor

They are saying they smell gas, and they can't come out. (Transcript, WTC channel 09 Police desk 3541 Center, pg. 6)

47th floor, 911 Emergency recording 8:56:57 From floor 47 a female caller states building shook and smells gas.

47th floor

Tom Canavan: So we had one exit, back of the office. So I put my hand on the back of the door there, and it was kind of warm. We had some smoke coming up underneath. So I knew we weren't gonna go down that way. (Canavan was trapped briefly beneath the south tower collapse)

<http://www.buildthememorial.org/site/DocServer/TomCanavan.mp3?docID=1941>

47th floor

Teresa Veliz: "I got off [the elevator], turned the corner and opened the door to the ladies' room. I said good morning to a lady sitting at a mirror when the whole building shook. I thought it was an earthquake. Then I heard those banging noises on the other side of the wall. It sounded like someone had cut the elevator cables. It just fell and fell and fell.

I began to cry. "Oh, my God, I just got off that elevator!" I said. "That could have been me." I prayed those other people had gotten off on the 48th floor before the elevator dropped. But I didn't have much time to be upset because the building shook again, this time even more violently. The lady at the mirror grabbed onto me and held on for dear life."

Veliz went down a staircase with a coworker to the concourse level. In the mall, they got onto an up-escalator as the South Tower collapsed, causing a rush of wind which knocked them down. In the pitch black, Veliz and her coworker followed someone carrying a flashlight:

"The flashlight led us into Borders bookstore, up an escalator and out to Church Street. There were explosions going off everywhere. I was convinced that there were bombs planted all over the place and someone was sitting at a control panel pushing detonator buttons. I was afraid to go down Church Street toward Broadway, but I had to do it. I ended up on Vesey Street. There was another explosion. And another. I didn't know where to run." <http://www.thememoryhole.org/911/veliz-bombs.htm>

46th floor and below

The survivors of the first plot to bring down the Twin Towers, the botched attempt in 1993 that left six dead, had a great advantage over their colleagues. When the first explosion came, they knew to get out. Others were paralyzed by the noise, confused by the instructions. Consultant Andy Perry still has the reflexes. He grabbed his pal Nathan Shields from his office, and they began to run down 46 flights. With each passing floor more and more people joined the flow down the steps. The lights stayed on, but the lower stairs were filled with water from burst pipes and sprinklers. "Everyone watch your step," people called out. "Be careful!" The smell of jet fuel suffused the building. Hallways collapsed, flames shot out of a men's room. By the time they reached the lobby, they just wanted to get out--but the streets didn't look any safer. <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,174655-1,00.html>

45th floor

"...Rich Romanik ..I was in the men's room when the building got rocked, I opened the door which I was somewhat not to keen on doing. But, I said to myself, I will not die in the men's room, opened the door heavy smoke to the left and flames shooting out the service elevator, ran to my right to the stairs...down 45 flights through smoke and dust ...About the 9th floor the ceilings were cracking and the water pipes were busted pouring water on us...." <http://www.sraamerica.com/wtc.html>

42nd floor elevator plunge to lobby

"...Yuichi Itakura of the Bank of Yokohama was on an elevator in the north tower when it came to a violent halt on the 42nd floor and began to plunge. He pressed an emergency alarm switch but no one answered.

"After it has stopped, Itakura and seven others trapped in the elevator decided to wait for rescuers, but the panic set in as their cage began to fill with fumes and pungent smell of burning machinery...."

"I thought that was the end of me," Itakura admitted. However, their spirit was raised after someone spotted a gleam of light through a tiny opening between the door and the floor, suggesting that they were in fact on the first floor. They forced the door open to find the normally lively lobby of the center empty except for emergency workers." <http://www12.mainichi.co.jp/news/mdn/search-news/833787/world20trade20center-0-9.html>

Low 40's

David Frank: As we got into the low 40's the jet fuel got much more intense to the point where I thought we might pass out. People were clearly suffering the intense fumes and others were clearly beginning to panic. Roselle was not doing well panting heavily and we all needed water. Some people began passing small Poland Spring water bottles up to us from the floor below. This was a real relief. Roselle loved it. It cut some of the fuel taste burning our throats. It eased our sense of dehydration and smoke inhalation. Besides, it was wet.

I opened the door to the 40's floor and we momentarily stood in the doorway. I looked and saw no one on the floor. Smoke, and the smell of more jet fuel. We kept to the stairway.

Today, I believe that when the aircraft hit the north face of the tower, it's momentum, driven by the aircraft structure and fuel, vivisected the floor, slicing through the elevator shaft and effectively dumping fuel from the low 90's all the way down to the bottom. That's why we kept smelling fuel almost all the way down. http://www.mwoa.org/David_Frank.html

40th floor

Lynn Lickers: "We were on the 40th floor (I think) when some firemen and police officers moved us to another stairwell since the one we were in was too congested. As we walked across the hallways to get to the south side stairwell, the stench of jet fuel permeated the air, and a ceiling down one of the corridors had collapsed. <http://www.gjsentinel.com/auto/feed/features/2001/12/23/1009089283.20432.8185.4701.html>

40th floor

Judith Toppin: As we walked across the hallways to get to the south side stairwell the stench of jet fuel permeated the air and a ceiling down one of the corridors had collapsed. http://www.cardinalspellman.org/alumni/alumni_angels_walk.htm

40th floor: Jolt, sway, jolt, explosion.

Brendan MacWade: At 08:48, as I was sitting in my chair, I felt a tremendous jolt. My office chair rolled in one direction and then the opposite direction. During the sway, I could hear the grinding of concrete and steel.

A second jolt hit as I was standing on the ramp leading down to the reception area. Again, the building leaned one way and sprang back the next. This was also accompanied by the sound of an explosion.

40th floor

Jareau Almeyda : The next 30 flights were all stop and go. At about the 40th floor, we came to a dead stop. There was a closed door and a fire on that floor. That was a very scary moment. Someone behind us yelled he had the key. When he got to the door, it was the wrong key. I thought to my self, "I don't want to burn to death." We quickly looked for another way out. We moved back up one floor to another nearby stairwell. We made it down another 20 flights in the same manner, stop and go. All the while people were very orderly; they kept their calm. We exchanged thoughts.... <http://www.salsationonline.com/jareau.htm>

40s

"I saw the elevator in front me had flames coming out from it. The elevator was closed but the flames came from the front where the doors meet and on the sides. They reached about a foot and a half, with the flames standing from the floor to the ceiling. I saw a chandelier shaking; it was really moving. The corridor was dim. I also heard people screaming from the [nearby] floor. I felt the heat on my face and I thought that my eyebrows were going to get burned. Black smoke starting filling the corridor, it got really dense really fast." [nterview 1000109 \(NIST 2004\) http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-7.pdf](http://www.nterview1000109(NIST2004)http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-7.pdf)

Below 39th floor

Bob Jenkins: There was the definite smell of burning jet fuel in the stairs. I knew this because I served my last year in the Marine Corps at the Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan. I smelled burning jet fuel every day. ...why was there so much smoke coming from below and getting worse?? Much worse? Many people had covered their mouth and nose to try and breath easier. My eyes were burning so badly I had a steady stream of tears, as did everyone. <http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread33943/pg3>

Below 39th floor

William Rodriguez: The stairs were cracking. The sheet rock, when I went up opening the doors, was falling on top of me and on top of the firemen constantly. And the *swaying of the building* made it easier for that to come off. [Source](#)

38th (and 43rd) floor, near elevators

On the 38th floor, Joe Shearin exited the elevator and began his walk down the hallway to meet with the tenant who had requested to see him. About 50 feet down the hallway, he heard a loud explosion and was lifted into the air. "I can't even tell you how far I traveled," he recalled. When he landed, people were already coming out of their offices into the hallway. "They were screaming, hollering," he said. "They were asking what they should do and where they should go". Joe directed them down the stairwells and out of the building.

What Joe first believed was that an equipment room on the 43rd floor, which had an electrical substation, had blown up. He proceeded up the 5 floors to that level. Upon reaching the 43rd floor, "there were patches of ceiling that was just down on the floor, water pipes were broken, water was gushing like a brook or river that was just running down the corridor of the machine room". He began yelling to see if anyone was in the room and received no reply. <http://www.chiefengineer.org/article.cfm?seqnum1=1029>

38th floor: stairwell blocked by debris

Sure, Livon Neil is one of the lucky ones. He was in the North Tower on September 11, but he survived. He was only on the 38th floor, and well out of there by the time it fell. But while Neil may have escaped unharmed, he is most certainly not unscathed.

After diving under his desk in response to what he thought was an earthquake, the 30-year-old systems analyst (who graduated with a bachelor of science in physiology and human biology in 1994 while attending New College) heard "screaming coming from the elevator shaft, like ladies screaming. And I saw dust coming out, smoke." He ran toward the stairs, only to hear more yelling from below. There seemed to be no way out for anybody. He huddled in the stairway for some 20 minutes, until a phalanx of firefighters – many of them soon to sacrifice their own lives – arrived and opened an exit for him and his group. "While I was coming out," Neil says softly, "it was like a war zone. I looked up and saw a person in mid-air. I looked to my right in the courtyard and there were body parts." <http://www.magazine.utoronto.ca/02winter/testimony.asp>

36th floor

Kemper Insurance survivor: The noise is loud and distant but ominous. The buildings are designed to sway in high winds but this felt like a giant fist of God had slammed us to the side. It almost feels like the building was going to slowly topple right then. First thought. Bomb? Plane? Whatever it was... the building did not just "sway" back into a normal position. The whump turns to a lingering rumble as the plane continues to blast through the building and the fireball explodes. A harmonic resonance seems to have started. It feels like an earthquake and looks like files and cabinets may begin toppling. <http://www.coping.org/911/survivor/kemper.htm>

Below 36th floor

Leslie Haskin: The heat was insufferable and the smoke was rancid. "It was no ordinary smoke," says Leslie. It was pungent and fuel-saturated. "It burned our throats and eyes," she says. http://www.cbn.com/700club/guests/bios/081006leslie_haskin.aspx

35th floor

Ken McLellan: ...I heard a horrible whooshing sound. The sound was not like the familiar sound a plane makes when it's coming in for a landing. It was the sound of a plane or some type of aircraft traveling a full speed. This sound lasted for about two seconds. I will carry the memory of that sound to my grave.

"Immediately, there was an explosion and the whole building moved. I almost fell out of my chair. I felt like I was on a boat. My heart started racing. "What the f**k was that?", I thought to myself. Then, I smelled jet fuel. I thought that a helicopter had hit the building.

<http://www.panix.com/~owsj/11SeptMurraySt.html>

Below 35th floor: Didn't hear impact

Kemper Insurance executive Susan Doyle was in an colleague's 35th-floor office in the North Tower of the World Trade Center on Tuesday morning when the building began to shudder. The jolt was so strong that the tower "felt like it might fall over," she recalls. Her first instinct, in fact, was that it was an earthquake. But then, she and others peered out the windows and noticed that the rest of lower Manhattan looked normal. And that's when it dawned on them: "Whatever had happened had happened just to us. We all looked at one another and knew we needed to get out."

And so, unaware that a jetliner had rammed the building, Ms. Doyle and dozens of co-workers headed straight to the stairs for the long trip down. In all, Kemper had 225 employees working on the 35th and 36th floors. Workers from other companies also streamed onto the stairs, packing them.

The trek was treacherous. Smoke filled the stairwell -- the haze got thicker as the throng descended -- and Ms. Doyle put her jacket up to her nose and mouth. Those on the stairs stopped and opened the door at every floor, hoping to find a pocket of fresh air; they found none.

For the most part, Ms. Doyle said, the crowd didn't panic -- except when they came to a stop from time to time, for reasons unclear. Those were the moments that "people started to breathe very hard and get wild-eyed. Then someone would put their arms around them and say, 'It's going to be OK.' " At the 27th floor, Ms. Doyle encountered several people trying to help a wheelchair-bound colleague who was stuck on the landing. A bit later, she and others alerted a couple of fire officials -- who were coming up the stairs -- to the stranded man's plight. They promised to help.

About 15 minutes into the trip down, Ms. Doyle heard a loud noise, and the lights in the stairwell flickered. Looking back, she assumes that's when the second plane struck the other tower. Shortly after that, water -- apparently from the fire-suppression system -- began soaking the floor. For the last part of the descent, she tramped through as much as six inches of water.

<http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/inferno09142002.htm>

34th floor

Jimmy Loughran : "The whole building began to sway about six of seven feet each way. It was like being rocked around in a boat," he said.

"Everybody froze, we didn't know what had happened. Then there was a massive explosion, it must have been the fuel from the plane exploding after the initial impact.

"Once we saw all the debris falling down the outside of the building - a huge shower of glass and metal - we began running to the stairs," said Mr Loughran. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/1545709.stm

34th floor

On Sept. 11, Craig Trykowski, a laborer for Henegan Construction Co. in New York City for the past two years, was working with 75 tradespersons and colleagues on interior construction for Lehman Brothers on the 34th floor of the north tower of the World Trade Center. He had been working at the WTC for a little over three months. "The job was going well," he says. It was a few minutes before 9:00 a.m.

"I was trying to clear the area of sheetrock and other stuff and just as I was filling the dumpster, the whole building shook. It swayed back and forth. We saw debris flying and then there was an explosion," he says. "I thought at first it was an earthquake."

What Trykowski and the thousands of other people working in the building didn't yet know was that an American Airlines jet, Flight 11, which left from Boston for Los Angeles, had been hijacked, diverted to New York and driven into the tower. It would eventually cause the collapse of the building a little more than two hours later,

"We hit the stairwell; it was a mass panic." They headed down the stairs under seemingly normal conditions but when they got to about the 20th floor, a strong gas smell hit them and by the 17th floor the water pipes had broken and people were tripping on the stairs. "We didn't know what the gas smell was; I told people to put their hands over their mouths," he says. "When we got down was when we saw the smoke. All the glass was blown out in the building."

Firefighters were there to help evacuate and rescue the tenants. "The sad part was that as we finally left, the first group of firemen were going up. They're all gone now," says Trykowski.

Trykowski, along with two electricians and two carpenters, made it safely to the street. "We saw the top of the building as it came tumbling down," he says. "We almost didn't make it out of the building." <http://www.construction.com/NewsCenter/it/people/02-20010912.asp>

34th floor

Yin Liang, employed by Lehman Brothers on the 40th floor north tower:

There are heavy smokes coming in from the 33-34th floor, we hesitated for a while, wandering if we should keep going down in the smoke, then we moved on, I covered my mouth and nose with a piece of facial tissue, we keep talking to each other, I guess there must be a fire going on at certain floors... <http://www.miraclebridge.com/wtcescape.html>

Above 33rd floor

FDNY Lieutenant Warren Smith: They were hearing reports on the radio, jet fuel on the upper floors, odor. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110223.PDF

30th floor Jen Murawski: "At 8:46am, the 1st plane flew into the north tower, my building. My co-workers and I escaped by descending 30 flights of stairs through jet fuel fumes and water." http://representativepress.blogspot.com/2007_01_01_archive.html

30s

"...Ciara Linnane, 37, an Irish foreign correspondent, was in tower one ...By the 30th floor it was incredibly slow. It took about half an hour to get to the 20th because so many people were piling from the other offices. You could see the walls of the corridors buckling..."

<http://www.sundayherald.com/18469>

29th floor

Diane Sears: Around 8:44 a.m. I heard what sounded like the whine of an incoming missile (I thought "are we under attack?" and tried to imagine from where a missile could possibly have been launched.) I heard a thunderous BOOM; the building shook violently and the floor (each floor was approximately one acre in size) did a rolling wave; I saw debris falling past the windows.

I left the conference room and saw a co-worker standing spread eagle. He said he thought it was an earthquake, I told him something big had hit the building as there was debris falling from higher up and raining past the windows. I asked him if he had heard the incoming sound but apparently he had not.

... At floor 9, the overhead sprinklers were on all the way to floor 1. Around floor 3, structural damage could be seen; the same at 2. When we emerged from the stairwell at 1, the marble-lined lobby was in shambles. The lobby looked as though a bomb had gone off and the elevator wells imploded. The sprinklers were still on but the smell of jet fuel and the dust and smoke was not as bad there.

<http://911digitalarchive.org/stories/details/1001>

28th floor: felt before hearing.

Julie Anderson, 33, manager of public affairs, was in her office on the 28th floor, talking with a co-worker, when they felt the building shake, then heard a "screechy sound," presumably of metal grinding.

She looked out her window and saw debris falling. The she smelled something, which she now assumes was jet fuel.

She and others made for the stairs. The stairwells were completely lit. There was no heavy smoke. "People were coughing a little and their eyes were watering and you had to hold a sleeve or tissue in front of your face," she said. "But people kept moving."

<http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/inferno09142002.htm>

27th floor, as south tower collapses

The North Tower shook and swayed with the concussion. The lights went out. The rumble shook jet fuel, flowing it down the elevator shafts; Jonas smelled a strong odor of kerosene. He pressed his air mask to his face. <http://www.projo.com/words/st20021016.htm>

27th floor

Firefighter Gregg Hansson: A couple people, civilians, indicated to me that there was an elevator that was working at this time. But I had already gotten transmissions over the air that some elevators had already crashed down to the first floor. I told them no one is getting in an elevator.

27th floor

Aaron David Brensel: People were crying, some visibly shaken. Although I did not show it, I was one of them. Everything was in disarray. I wanted to call home. I went over to several telephones, but none were working. After a while, we were allowed to go back to the stairwell. I do not even know if it was the same one. I never looked at my watch while I was in the building. The hallways were cloudy, but it was not thick smoke. There was a strange odor. I am told it was jet fuel vapors, but I do not know. I just remember that it smelled bad and I was very nervous. <http://www.911digitalarchive.org/stories/details/1027>

25th floor (approximately)

At this point we started smelling jet fuel and the smoke in the stairway. The smell was very strong and it was kind of hard to breathe. The fire alarms were now going off but there were no sprinklers in the stairway. I'm not sure if the fire alarms were always going off or if I just noticed the alarms when we started smelling the jet fuel and smoke. The firefighters that we met in the stairway started telling us to cover our noses. We did as we were told. It was getting hotter in the stairway as we carried on and everyone was drenched in sweat. All the guys were taking off their sport coats and shirts, leaving on their undershirt. The women were taking off their sport coats as well. Some women were taking off their shoes and leaving them behind in the stairway. I took off my sport coat and covered my nose with it. The smell was so horrific.

At this point I started to get a little scared again and so very bothered. I kept wondering why we now smelled jet fuel and smoke when the plane hit between 79th and 83rd floor. I was wondering if there was fire somewhere down below us that we didn't know about. There was an older man a couple of people ahead of us that would feel each door as he passed. He would then yell, "This door is cool, no fire".

<http://www.911injured.org/Stories/kimk.htm>

25th floor to Lobby: Christopher Ferrer:

I remember this so clearly. It started as a rumble in our seats, and then grew into vibrations from the ceiling to the floor. It moved the building so much that our desk drawers popped open. We all stood up immediately, but couldn't move. The building was shaking from side to side, and we froze just to keep our balance. My vision was even affected. It was no different than watching some old movie that shook the camera to give the audience a sense of what was happening.

...I thought it was odd that no one was coming into our stairwell from other floors. I assumed that they found other stairwells. ... 21, 20, 19 ... I could smell something familiar. There it is, my first connection to the outside. I could smell something. What is it? It reminds me of something. Kerosene? It smells like the kerosene heaters my father had 20 years ago in the Poconos. (I never made the connection to jet fuel until later on.)

...Some said they saw bodies fall; some saw debris. 13, 12, Our Father, Hail Mary, 11, 10, "hold it." We hear someone say something about what was going on ahead of us. We keep going; 9, 8, 7, then again, "hold it."

That's when we heard, "there's water down here." Picture the scene. You can only see half a flight below you and half above. If you crane your neck into the center of the stairs, all you can see are dozens of hands. There is still no panic. We are using those ahead of us as scouts, listening to whatever we could. The smell of burning kerosene is getting stronger.

"There's water on 4." 6, 5, there it is. Water is seeping from the bottom of the stairwell door on 4, and beginning to flow down the steps. We get to 3 and it's cascading down the steps. By the time we reach 2, it's a few inches deep. We leave the stairwell onto the concourse. The view was war-like. When we came out of the emergency door, you could see burned debris all over the plaza. I didn't

see anything falling, but I still remember the thumping sounds. It wasn't until I met up with a coworker that I realized the thumping was bodies falling.

When we got to 1, the elevator doors were blown out and blackened. These were our first images of what was happening. They led us out the Marriott Hotel lobby. On the floor to our right was a fireman with a woman who was blackened from head to toe, barely alive, if alive at all.

http://alumni.stevens-tech.edu/News_...03-04_Art4.htm

23rd floor

FDNY Lieutenant Mickey Kross: When I got up to 23, it was kind of quiet on the floor—very dark. I saw some firefighters moving around, but not any command posts or chiefs. The hallway was full of debris where I was walking, debris about three feet high covering a whole section of the hallway. I was puzzled as to what that was, because I knew that the plane had hit way above us. So as I got there I realized it was the elevator shafts. The doors or the walls had probably blown out, and I had to climb over the debris to get the other side of the hallway. Here, I was a little concerned about falling into the pit, the elevator shaft. (Smith, Dennis: Report From Ground Zero. New York: Viking Press, 2002. Pp. 72-73)

22nd floor

—(Female trapped): There's a fire outside of 22! There's a fire on 22!

—(Male responding): Fire on 22, where? A or B tower?

—(Female trapped): This is the SCC, A tower, the 22nd floor. We see a lot of debris. We are stuck on 22...the door is blocked. There is a fire. (Port Authority Transcript, WTC Ch. 27: Security, p. 1)

22nd floor

Firefighter Paul Bessler: On the 22nd floor, some of the elevator shafts were actually open. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110503.PDF

22nd floor

Firefighter Craig Dunne: The elevator shafts were blown out, so they had to make their way around -- the fire came down the elevator shafts. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110490.PDF

22nd floor

Firefighter Michael Yarembinsky: We noticed in the hallway that the elevator shaft had been blown out. There was nothing there, no doors, no framing, nothing. When you looked down, all you saw was the cables for the elevator and the brick work that was surrounding.

Q: Was it burning?

A: No burning, no smoke coming out of it. (just before ST collapse) http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110446.PDF

22nd floor

Firefighter Kirk Long: We were also with 16 Engine on the 22nd floor. When the building shook, I was right next to an elevator shaft with Andy, crawling down the hallway. I was waiting for a flame to come up from the basement because I believed something in the basement blew up. Nothing like that happened, so I was waiting for a flame to come down from a plane. Nothing like that happened. Still at that time I never knew that the south tower had gone down. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110509.PDF

22nd floor

"First plane hit our building at 8:45. We decided to evacuate from the 22nd floor after 15 minutes. The delay was because we did not know the extent of the damage; part of the 22nd floor was sheared away and the corridor was blocked by fallen debris. Four of us decided it was better to try to get out than stay and wait to be rescued (in hindsight a good decision). We had to crawl for ten to fifteen feet under debris to get to the fire stairs...." <http://www.huemer.com/>

21st floor

Arthur Riccio, FDNY "It was a little hazy. The bathrooms were charred." http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110277.PDF

21st floor

Richard P LoPresti: Stepping back to the beginning, approx 8:45am, I was looking for a file to support an expense on our July reports. Suddenly, I heard a muffled explosion with echoed report, rocking the tower at least a foot, back and forth, like an amusement park ride. I was thrown against a desk. All filing cabinets slid open. I tried to close them but there were too many. Roger said later to us that he thought that the tower was going to fall. It didn't, allowing us to exit to the stairs, but not until I turned off my computer properly, and coming back again in my office to get as many towels I could get to cover our faces, on the lightly Smokey stairwell. I forgot to douse the towels with water, but it was better than nothing. <http://911digitalarchive.org/stories/details/273>

Lower floors

Arturo (Griffith) was running 50A, the big freight car going from the six-level basement to the 108th floor. When American Airlines Flight 11 struck at 8:46 a.m., Arturo and a co-worker were heading from the second-level basement to the 49th floor.

Like his wife, who had just closed the doors on a passenger elevator leaving the 78th floor, Arturo heard a sudden whistling sound and the impact. Cables were severed and Arturo's car plunged into free fall.

"The only thing I remember saying was 'Oh, God, Oh, God, I'm going to die,' " he says, recalling how he tried to protect his head as the car plummeted.

The emergency brakes caught after 15 or 16 floors. The imploding elevator door crushed Arturo's right knee and broke the tibia below it. His passenger escaped injury. (The 50 car came to rest just below the B1 landing.) <http://www.usatoday.com/life/sept11/2002-09-10-survivor->

[griffiths_x.htm](#)

13th floor

Port Authority Police Officer Roger Fernandez: On the morning of September 11th, I was in tower one on the 13th floor. I was working at my desk when the first plane struck at 8:44:48. There was a loud explosion followed by the building swaying and shaking violently from one side to another. Large amounts of debris could be seen falling past the windows followed by a stream of what appeared to be water.

...As we descended stairwell C, a large cloud of smoke with an odor of fuel, rapidly overtook us causing many on the lower floors to start choking and coughing. ...After about five minutes, I managed to get back to the 13th floor where I finally found out that a plane had crashed into the building on CNN's web site.

Several things stand out in my mind about what happened next; we now believed that the clear liquid that was streaming outside of our window was not water but jet fuel.

<http://www.thememoryhole.org/911/pa-transcripts/pa-police-reports02.pdf>

12th floor

Jeff: When we reached the 12th floor the air resounded with a dull thud, and the steps quivered. As one we looked up the way we had come, fearing that the fuel we could smell should turn to flame. When that did not occur we resumed our trek. <http://www.aquaticplantcentral.com/forumapc/announcements/30891-human-tragedy-remembered.html>

floors: 9, 8, 7, 6 (Bob Jenkins) – close wasn't close enough! Close doesn't count! By now there was more smoke and now water from all the broken pipes above mixed with jet fuel pouring down over us.

<http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread33943/pg3>

8th floor

Male: Forty-four A to C (inaudible), can you get an ambulance over here? One of the guards is hurt over here. Over....Eighth floor, S2, to OSCC. (Port Authority Transcript, WTC Ch. 27: Security, p. 1)

7th floor

Rick Collins, ABM: On Sept. 11, a plummeting freight elevator sucked a steel beam and flaming jet fuel down the shaft, scorching the seventh-floor mechanical room where Collins stood. The impact of the beam sealed the door shut. With his clothes, skin and hair on fire, he grabbed a pipe and chopped his way through the door. Outside, the south tower crumbled above him and he barely escaped.

http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/specials/911/showcase/ny-nystaf092916637sep09_0_1597086.story??track=sto-relcon

Susan Keane: "the jet fumes and the smell of the fuel were too much. The water running down the stairs was black" Susan Hagen and Mary Caruba. Women at Ground Zero: Stories of Courage and Compassion. Indianapolis: Alpha Books, 2002. P. 64

6th or 7th floor

Firefighter Hugh Mettham: We reached the sixth or seventh floor and are met by many firefighters coming down the stairs, informing us that the upper floors are collapsing and that there's a heavy odor of gas and fuel. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110441.PDF

5th floor, post-collapse

PAPD officer Dave Lim: "We smell jet fuel, and I wonder now, having survived this, is everything just going to explode into fire?" (Dennis Smith: Report From Ground Zero. New York: Viking Press, 2002, p. 91)

4th floor, post-collapse

FDNY Battalion Commander Richard Picciotto: I thought of the jet fuel, and I knew we were vulnerable. Oh, man, were we vulnerable! There was the enormous and unending potential for sparks in a building collapse such as this, miles and miles of cables and wires and water pipes, and the vapors from the fuel could combust at any moment. (Richard Picciotto & Daniel Paisner. Last Man Down. New York: Berkeley Books, 2002. p. 127)

4th floor

Marvin Pickrum: There was smoke above us and below us, so we go through the exit door into this hallway, but..."

"The hallway was on fire, too. The flames were hot, so hot that it would eventually cause the North Tower to finally collapse as well. Pickrum had no idea that the South Tower had just collapsed, though, because no one could see what was going on outside.

"I'm right in the middle of this fire and, you know, the heat and smoke were so hot that you couldn't breathe," Pickrum says. "I even started to panic at that point."

"Pickrum was prepared to take his chances by leaping out the window. There was no other way to escape from the fire. There was no other way to get some air into his smoke-filled lungs. He didn't want to die, but he and the others were now trapped inside the building.

"At some point Pickrum made the decision to jump. "I decided that I'm not going to be burned alive," he recalled.

"He was now beyond desperate. It was a miracle he had made it down this far. Then, just as everything seemed hopeless, Pickrum saw the miraculous images of firefighters coming in with flashlights and water hoses. That was the only thing that stopped him from going out the window.

"I can't emphasize enough how much credit to give to those firefighters for saving our lives," says Pickrum. "My heart goes out to all of them and their families." <http://4bypass.com/archives/nov%2D01.htm>

3rd floor

Firefighter Michael Byrne: Captain Burke decided we would either go up on our own or wait for someone. We went up, started our way up. We went to the bank of elevators. We pulled a lady out of the bank, one of the banks. We used a rabbit tool. Most of the banks were

blown off. The doors were charred and dismembered, some of them. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110500.PDF

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Inside the North Tower: Witness Accounts, Plaza Level & Concourse Lobbies, Basements

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Plaza Level & Concourse Lobbies

At 8:48 a.m., Sept. 11, Capps was in a business meeting in a restaurant on the first floor of Tower 1 in the World Trade Center complex. He didn't hear an explosion, but when the chandelier above him began to shake, he was reminded of the earthquake he experienced in San Francisco eight years ago. http://southwestfarmpress.com/mag/farming_attacks_change_lives/

"...Narrator: ... At 9:30, they emerged from the cramped stairwell to a horrifying scene. Some of the elevators had become fireballs, melted beyond recognition."

Sue Zupnik: "It was all warped. My jaw dropped. I couldn't believe it...."
<http://www.deaftown.com/communitycenter/news/archive/Dateline011120.html>

Lakshman Achutan was attending a meeting on the ground floor of the north tower of the World Trade Center when it was attacked. He describes the initial impact, his escape, and his view of the second plane as it approached the south tower. There was a very strong thud, and the chandeliers shook. And then there was a second thud or explosion, and more chandeliers shook, the lights flickered, and our group, which was about 175 people, stood up and ran for the exits. (Audio recording) [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/afc911bib:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(afc911000144\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/afc911bib:@field(DOCID+@lit(afc911000144)))

The scenes passed in surreal succession. Michael Zhu, a 33-year-old resident of South Plainfield, descended 51 stories of the North Tower and escaped before it collapsed, alongside fellow workers bearing burn victims in their arms. In the lobby, he smelled gasoline as the overhead sprinklers soaked his dusty clothing. "I feel like I am going to die," he said. <http://www.nj.com/specialprojects/index.ssf?specialprojects/terror/images.html>

Tom Canavan: All the elevator doors were knocked off. They were almost crooked.
<http://www.buildthememorial.org/site/DocServer/TomCanavan.mp3?docID=1941>

Earlyne Johnson: The communications specialist had just missed the elevator up to her 65th-floor office when she felt an explosion, followed by a hail of shattering glass. She covered her head with her arms, dashed for the exit, then set out to find her 51-year-old, asthmatic mother, who worked on the 73rd floor. She searched for twelve hours, before finding her safe at home in Newark late that night. <http://nymag.com/news/features/19146/index1.html>

Elevator stalls on way up, just above lobby.

Ian Robb: It was a good day to be late for work. As Ian Robb, a Leeds-born personnel manager for a financial services firm, pushed into the lobby of the north tower of the World Trade Centre on Tuesday morning he was already running half-an-hour behind - it was already past 8.45am. His sense of flustered impatience must have been compounded when he just missed one of the express lifts for the upper floors. Mild exasperation surely mounted to irritated frustration when the elevator he did catch stopped moving almost immediately and lodged in the lift shaft. It was, classically, one of those "why me?" moments.

In the stalled lift in which Ian Robb was trapped, routine exasperation had given way to rising alarm as the sprinkler system slowly began to flood it. Those inside prised the doors open to discover that they were still on the ground floor. A fireman told him that the lift he'd just missed had crashed to the bottom of its shaft. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20010918/ai_n14406873

Erik O. Ronningen: The main lobby was a shambles. Chandeliers down; the marble walls in broken piles on the floor; the giant directional signage dangling from the ceilings; all the windows broken, the revolving doors broken and off kilter and the elevator doors all blown out. We walked through water pouring out of the ceiling like Niagara Falls, and sloshed through the darkened Mall in shin-deep water. <http://www.bigmedicine.ca/erikronningens911.htm>

Below: Broken lobby windows, looking east at debris on outdoor plaza (before south tower collapse); marble knocked off north tower lobby core wall.



Fig. 22: NYFD Battalion Chief Pfeiffer entering damaged WTC 1 lobby shortly after aircraft impact.

Graphic descriptions of injuries and fatalities follow.

Firefighter John Morabito of ladder 10, which is just 200 yards from the north tower.

"Just inside the front entrance, Morabito found two victims of the fireball. A man, already dead, was pushed against a wall, his clothes gone, his eyeglasses blackened, his tongue lying on the floor next to him. The other was a woman, with no clothes, her hair burned off, her eyes sealed.

"The woman, she sat up. I'm yelling to her, 'Don't worry, we're going to help you,'" Morabito said. "She sat up and was trying to talk, but her throat had closed up. She died right there." <http://www.fdnynhouse.com/911/story01.htm>

Mercedes Rivera: I saw a burned woman in a sitting position in the lobby, as if she was still typing behind a desk.... She was already dead." Susan Hagen and Mary Carouba. Women at Ground Zero: Stories of Courage and Compassion. Indianapolis: Alpha Books, 2002. P. 22

Dave Bobbitt, Port Authority Operations

"It was quite hectic, and we did what we could to stay in contact with the elevator passengers while helping to direct other people out of the building and direct firemen to the stairs and the elevators," Bobbitt remarked. "When entering the North Tower, we saw the marble on the walls was severely cracked, and Riccardelli told everyone to stay back from the walls. Don (Parente) noticed that the doors of elevators number 6 and 7 had been blown out." —Courage Above and Beyond the Call of Duty: A Report of the September 11, 2001 Experiences of Port Authority Engineers at the World Trade Center

Lobby & 3rd floor: Firefighter Peter Blaich

As we got to the third floor of the B stairway, we forced open an elevator door which was burnt on all three sides. The only thing that was remaining was the hoistway door. And inside the elevator were about I didn't recognize them initially, but a guy from 1 Truck said oh my God, those are people. They were pretty incinerated. And I remember the overpowering smell of kerosene. That's when Lieutenant Foti said oh, that's the jet fuel. I remember it smelled like if you're camping and you drop a kerosene lamp.

The same thing happened to the elevators in the main lobby. They were basically blown out. I do't recall if I actually saw people in there. What got me initially in the lobby was that as soon as we went in, all the windows were blown out, and there were one or two burning cars outside. And there were burn victims on the street there, walking around. We walked through this giant blown-out window into the lobby.

There was a lady there screaming that she didn't know how she got burnt. She was just in the lobby and then next thing she knew she was on fire. She was burnt bad. And somebody came over with a fire extinguisher and was putting water on her.

That's the first thing that got me. That and in front of one of the big elevator banks in the lobby was a desk and I definitely made out one of the corpses to be a security guard because he had a security label on his jacket. I'm assuming that maybe he was at a table still in a chair and almost completely incinerated, charred all over his body, definitely dead. And you could make out like a security tag on his jacket. And I remember seeing the table was melted, but he was still fused in the chair and that elevator bank was melted, so I imagine the jet fuel must have blown right down the elevator shaft and I guess caught the security guard at a table, I guess at some type of checkpoint. <http://www.firehouse.com/terrorist/9...gz/blaich.html>

Brian Reeves, a 34-year-old security guard, was nearly killed while making the rounds in the lobby of 1 World Trade Center on September 11. He started to run after hearing an explosion that he said sounded like a missile, but he was knocked down by a fireball that roared down the elevator shaft.

Reeves suffered third-degree burns to 40 percent of his body before he was able to pat out the flames. He was one of 20 critically-injured patients rushed to New York Presbyterian's burn unit that day. http://www.ny1.com/pages/RRR/911special_survivors.html

Ronnie Clifford and Jennianne Maffeo

At around 8.45am, Ronnie walked into the lobby of the Marriott, which was connected to the lobby of the north tower by a revolving door. As he was checking his yellow tie in a mirror, he felt a massive explosion, followed several seconds later by a reverberation, a warping effect that he describes as the "harmonic tolerance of a building that's shaking like a tuning fork". He peered through the revolving door into the lobby of the north tower. It was filling with haze. People were scurrying to escape what had become a "hurricane of flying debris".

Then the revolving door turned with a suctioning sound followed by a hot burst of wind, and in came a mannequin of the future. A woman, naked, dazed, her arms outstretched. She was so badly burned that Ronnie had no idea what race she was or how old she might be. She clawed the air with fingernails turned porcelain-white. The zipper of what had once been a sweater had melted into her chest, as if it were the zipper to her own body. Her hair had been singed to a crisp steel wool. With her, in the gust of the door, came a pungent odour, the smell of kerosene or paraffin, Ronnie thought.

Then the mannequin became a person, crying for help. Ronnie had little idea what had happened to her, or where exactly she had come from, but he knew that whoever she was, she was his responsibility now.

With no medical training, Ronnie Clifford scarcely knew what to do with the helpless woman who stood before him. He sat her down on the cool marble floor, then dashed into the bathroom and ran water into a clean black garbage bag that he found. He hurried back out and dribbled the contents over her body. Then he sat down on the puddled floor and tried to comfort her. Despite her condition, she was lucid.

He took out a pen and notepad and jotted down her information. Her name was Jennieann Maffeo. She was Italian-American, from Brooklyn, single, 40 years old. She worked for USB PaineWebber. She was an asthmatic, she said, and had an extreme intolerance to latex. She could not adequately describe what had happened to her.

She had been standing outside the north tower next to a man she knew, waiting for a bus, when she heard a loud crash above. In an effort to protect them from falling debris, a security guard herded everyone inside the tower's lobby. Suddenly, she told Ronnie, something bright and hot enveloped her, a vapour maybe. She thought it could have dropped down the elevator shaft. She was worried

about the man who'd been next to her. Surely he was dead, she feared.

"He thought he was the lucky one, but then tragedy struck" Irish Independent, Sept. 11, 2002. (The above is an excerpt. Ronnie Clifford was able to get Jennieann Maffeo to an ambulance. She died in the hospital on October 12, 2001.) <http://www.unison.ie/features/911oneyearon/stories.php?ca=261&si=823151>

I have a badly burned lady at the lobby of ...they need an ambulance ASAP...One World Trade Center. (Port Authority Transcript WTC Ch. 15 EMS direct line, p. 5)

(Vasana) Mutuanot was in the lobby of Tower One when she heard the first explosion. Thinking it was a bomb like the terrorist attack in 1993, she turned to run, looking over her shoulder as flames leaped from a freight elevator shaft cooking her back and legs and right cheek. "It was a fireball with sand and heat, like a hurricane of fire," she said. <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/special/terror/aftermath/1051698.html>

Mutanant ran out of the building then fell after flying glass sliced through a tendon in her leg. A wall of fire followed her outside. "Swept to my back from my feet up and then I see fire all over, in my hair, also. A lot of people just blew away, you know, like that." http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/terrorism/july-dec01/recovery_10-11.html

David Kravette, a managing director of Cantor Fitzgerald, the bond trading firm that occupied the upper floors of the North Tower and lost about 700 people, or more than two thirds of its 1,000 U.S.-based employees addressed what he saw in the lobby as the first plane hit. I have provided this quote from the Mercury News New York Bureau since it is the only reference I have seen to the free falling elevators and the fire ball at the lower levels of the tower.

"I saw a couple of elevators in free fall; you could hear them whizzing down and as they crashed, there was this huge explosion, like a fireball exploding out of the bank of elevators," Kravette said. "People were engulfed in flames." <http://www.engr.psu.edu/ae/WTC/CantorFitzgerald.html>

Firefighter William Green: We entered in through the front doors of the lobby. The lobby was screwed. All the windows were already broken. Marble walls that surrounded the elevator shaft, they were cracked and broken. I'm still thinking a bomb went off.

We headed for the B staircase. It was pretty much in the center of the core. We had to go through these turnstiles. I remember there was a lot of rubble on the floor there. There was elevator doors ajar. There were elevator doors missing. I could see an elevator car twisted in the shaft.

I remember I looked up at the ceiling because I thought maybe the ceiling got charred because there was a bunch of rubble on the floor. It was about three feet high in the middle. The ceiling wasn't charred. So I had thought the floor blew up.

I was telling guys afterwards the floor must have blown up. Maybe there was a bomb downstairs or something. But I came to learn that that was bodies. We had to climb over and around this pile.

Q. A pile of bodies, in the lobby?

A. I didn't recognize it as bodies. I don't know if my mind didn't see it.

Q. Burned?

A. Burned.

Q. Near the elevators?

A. It looked like rubble to me.

Q. Right.

A. Right outside the elevators, in the core. We had to climb up and around it—it was like three feet high in the middle—to enter the B staircase. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110392.PDF

(Green was the only member of Engine 6, which headed up the B staircase behind William Rodriguez, to survive.)

Firefighter Geroze Kozlowski: We did see bodies that got pulled out of the elevators because all the elevators fell. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110308.PDF

Firefighter Craig Dunne: We proceeded to go into the lobby of tower one. We got in there. The glass was down in the front. There was a gentleman -- you saw people that were jumping from the building. You had to look up and make sure you didn't get hit by any jumpers or anything. We saw a couple of people that were burnt on the outside of the building. There was a gentleman that was burnt inside when we went in. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110490.PDF

Firefighter Peter Fallucca: Before we got in, all the elevators were crashed down in the lobby, and we were going to the stairwell. See all the elevators were crashed down, big slabs of marble on the floor, all the ceiling tiles of the dropped ceiling was falling down, wires hanging. You see wires and stuff hanging inside the elevator shafts, because the doors were blown right off the elevators. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/met_WTC_histories_full_01.html

FDNY Lieutenant William Walsh: In the center of these two elevator shafts would be the elevators that go to the lower floors. They were blown off the hinges. That's where the service [freight] elevator was also. ...They were blown off the hinges, and you could see the shafts. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110442.PDF

As he waited for orders, Meldrum, the chauffeur (Fire engine driver), noticed that all windows in the high lobby were blown out. Glass and marble from busted walls littered the floors, crunched underfoot. He caught an occasional whiff of jet fuel, a smell like kerosene, wafting from elevator shafts. On the floor by the elevators he saw burned people. <http://www.projo.com/words/st20021016.htm>

The doors parted, but the elevator had become stuck just as the bottom of the cab was reaching the lobby of the south tower. Only the feet of the trapped passengers were visible as the burning jet fuel that had cascaded down the shaft ahead of them threatened to broil them alive. <http://asrlab.org/press/md.php>

Firefighter Timothy Brown: We finally set up -- prior to this I believe it was the west side of the core of the building there were elevators. Someone had come to me and said that there were people trapped in one of those elevators. So I ran around the corner, and the hoist way doors were open, but the elevator car was only showing about two feet at the top of the door. You could see all the legs of the people that were in the elevator. I would guess there were about eight people in the elevator. The elevator pit was on fire with the jet fuel. People were screaming in the elevator. They were getting smoked and cooked. There weren't a lot of firemen there at the time. I grabbed some of the Port Authority employees and asked them where the fire extinguishers were and told them to get as many fire extinguishers as they could so we could try and fight this fire. As they were doing that, firemen started showing up, and I started asking them to get big cans, let's try to put this fire out.

http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/_national/sept11_fdny_transcripts/9110458.PDF

Lobby

Firefighter David Sandvik: We got down to the lobby, and when we got out of the stairwell, the lobby was deserted. Nobody was down there except the people coming out of our stairwell. We were walking through and the elevator doors were blowing [blown?] off. The lobby was just like a complete mess. I remember grabbing the proby that day and we were looking down the elevator bank and I said, man, this would make a hell of a picture. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110375.PDF

Firefighter John Moribito: I noticed that some of the elevators had been blown out of their shafts. They came down and crashed out of the shaft. They were buckled, and I had noticed that there were people still in the elevators. I believe that they were at that point deceased. Then I saw the lights in both buildings went out, and I heard the rumble. At that point, I didn't know what was happening, but 2 World Trade Center was collapsing. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110354.PDF

Firefighter Keith Murphy: To my immediate left is a bank. If I had to guess I would say it was maybe 75, 80 feet long. It was a pretty long elevator bank and it was big sky lobby elevators. They were like floor to ceiling, the ones that hold, I don't know, 60, 70 people. There was tremendous damage in the lobby. There was already things that were like fallen or cracked. A lot of structural wall damage and ceiling damage that I could see. There was also about four or five inches of water on the floor.

At the end of this elevator lobby, there was -- it just looked to me like something had exploded. I don't remember how I heard it or who said it, but someone said I think it was an elevator -- when the plane hit, it severed the elevator cable and it came all the way down and crashed. I don't know a hundred percent if that's what happened, but it looked to me like that could have been true. It looked like something had fallen down, hit, and exploded out. I mean the whole area around it was maybe 25, 30 feet of really severe damage.

I remember thinking, I looked at the elevators and I still wasn't feeling good about them, because the damage that I spoke about was more severe or at least up close I got to see it. There were pieces of marble, like ornamental marble I guess, on the walls that were maybe 2 foot by 3 foot pieces, maybe even a little bigger, that had split and cracked and some had actually fallen.

Some of the doors -- they were silver colored elevator doors and they were almost like hanging out of plumb. They just didn't look right. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110238.PDF

Firefighter John Ottrando: After I hooked up, I went into the lobby of the north tower and I saw the command post being set up there. I noticed some people on the floor that were badly burned. One man was deceased, and there was a woman there that was very badly burned. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110355.PDF

Deputy Commissioner Thomas Fitzpatrick: The lobby didn't look too good. The integrity of the elevators -- I started to think about the elevators. They had either blown out, cut off or could possibly have the cars coming down. The lobby was becoming an untenable place, especially if we wanted to continue operations. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110001.PDF

Firefighter Terence Rivera: As I got off the back -- the back step, there were a few individuals that were civilians that were outside that were burnt. There was a -- he wasn't a regular security guard. He had a weapon on him. I don't know if he was FBI or Secret Service and he was trying to put the pants out on one individual that was conscious. His pants were still smoldering. I took the can, fire extinguisher off the truck and then sprayed down the pants on the person that was still conscious.

At that time, I had asked him where did this individual come from. He told me when the plane had hit, a fire ball had shot down the elevator shaft and had blown people out of the lobby. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110343.PDF

Pfiefer arrived at the west-side entrance to 1 World Trade Center. Entering the tower he walked to the fire command station located in the northwest corner of the lobby. Many of the large windows in the lobby were broken, and pieces of marble in the elevator lobbies were cracked or had fallen from the impact of the jet between the 96th and the 103rd floors. Pfiefer was advised that numerous people were trapped in nearly 25 elevators, the highest was at the 71st floor. The elevators were not working. Apparently, jet fuel had poured down the elevator shafts. Some of the elevators were on fire. Signs of smoke and fire damage were visible at some elevators. Many of the elevator doors were missing.

Other firefighters reported finding additional burn victims on the first floor of the north tower. <http://www.firehouse.com/terrorist/911/magazine/harvey.html>

Firefighter Kevin Murray: The elevators looked like they were on fire in the lobby. There wasn't smoke coming out of them, but it looked like they all bubbled up and everything and there was a fire in there.

http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110020.PDF

Firefighter Gregg Hansson: We went past the elevator banks. You could see that they were all blown out. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110017.PDF

Firefighter Joseph Casaliggi: We went into the lobby. The lobby actually looked like the plane hit the lobby. From what I understand, I was told afterwards, that a fireball shot down the elevator shaft and blew out all the windows in the lobby and blew out the elevator doors. http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/_national/sept11_fdny_transcripts/9110430.PDF

Firefighter Thomas Piambino: When I got down to the lobby -- the lobby was in bad shape when I went up. It was worse when I came back down. All the elevator shaftway doors were blown out, and there was stuff coming down the -- just falling down the shafts, and the civilians had bogged down at the bottom of the stairs, because they were afraid to pass the elevator shafts, and there were piles of rubble all over the place. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110493.PDF

Capt. Jay Jonas, FDNY Ladder 6: Jonas walked over to his guys and said, "OK, here's the deal. We're gonna go upstairs and we're gonna perform search and rescue. The deal is, we're gonna have to do it on foot." He wasn't comfortable using the elevators after seeing them disgorge burned people. "We're gonna take 10 floors at a time, take a quick breather, and push on for 10 floors." <http://www.projo.com/words/st20021016.htm>

Greg Manning: For those of you who may not know the story, she was entering the lobby of the North Tower of the World Trade Center when a fireball exploded from the elevator shaft. She and two others managed to run out of the building, all three of them on fire. A passerby across the street ran to them, reaching Lauren [Manning] first, and put the flames out. He then put Lauren in an ambulance, so she was the first person evacuated. He certainly saved her life. <http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780553381894>

Lauren Manning: Building one. And as I walked into the building, the plane had hit -- I imagine as I was getting out of the cab -- and the fuel just poured down.

LARRY KING: You never got into the building?

L. MANNING: No, I got into the building. I walked into the lobby. As I was turning toward the elevator banks, the fireball exploded out and caught me from behind, and literally pushed me toward the doors as I was running, and...

KING: You kept running?

L. MANNING: Oh, I kept running through the initial panel of doors, through the revolving doors, outside, and my only desire was to -- you know, you think of anything having to do with fire is try to find a way to put it out. So I was running across the street to this grassy median area, and...

KING: You remember all this?

L. MANNING: I remember everything vividly. The, you know, people around me, the debris that began falling, and it was...

KING: Did you pass out eventually?

L. MANNING: No.

KING: Never passed out?

L. MANNING: No, I didn't. Because as I was running I was, you know, praying, probably screaming to God, Please, you know, help me. Help me. You know, I can't -- I can't leave now. It's not my time to leave.

KING: You kept thinking that?

L. MANNING: I did. I had to make a decision. I could feel myself going under. And losing consciousness, and I would not. And I didn't, so this wonderful man came and helped me.

KING: Put the fire out?

L. MANNING: Yes, he did, and I was able to give him Greg's phone number. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0210/01/lkl.00.html>

According to the accounts I have heard, Debbie was in the lobby waiting for an elevator when AA Flight 11 hit on 93. The jet fuel from the plane poured down the elevator shafts. Owing to the way the elevators are laid out, I don't understand how the fuel got into the elevator that she was waiting for. There are / (were) "Sky Lobbies" on 44 and on 78. So to go above those floors, you took an express elevator to the appropriate sky lobby and then transferred to a local elevator. The elevator machinery was located on the floors above the sky lobbies; only a very few shafts continued all the way up. Anyway, apparently she was in the lobby, the elevator shaftway doors opened and a fireball hit her with full force. She survived and was taken to a hospital with 90% burns. After lingering for about 50 days she died. <http://www.engr.psu.edu/ae/WTC/AlMasetti.html>

Bill Pekrol: Bill is one of those survivors and was on the 72nd floor of the North Tower when that first plane hit at 8:47 a.m. attending a

meeting with thirty people. The public address system issued its "all is safe" announcement. Bill and two attendees left the meeting after the building swayed and shook and numerous explosions set off by the jet fuel. Bill climbed down all 72 floors but when he arrived in the lobby of the Tower, 20 elevators exploded from the plane's jet fuel... the noise was horrendous and the tower was beginning to collapse.

Bill spent the next three months in St. Vincent's Hospital where he clinically died twice but was resuscitated. He saw "the light," the tunnel, angels, and his sister who died seventeen years ago. He was unconscious the first twenty days he spent in the hospital and was told he would probably not walk again. Bill sustained fuel burns on the dorsal sides of both hands and suffered three skull fractures, a crushed knee, a broken jaw, burned corneas, and a lacerated abdomen that required 200 stitches to close. His injuries were sustained from steel beams that were blowing apart. Later, Bill was told that he was brought out of the North Tower unconscious and less than five minutes before it collapsed.

<http://news.boisestate.edu/UPDATE/updatearchive/2003/09112003/0911meetbillpekrol.html>

Mike Pecoraro: "When I walked out into the lobby, it was incredible," he recalled. "The whole lobby was soot and black, elevator doors were missing. The marble was missing off some of the walls. 20-foot section of marble, 20 by 10 foot sections of marble, gone from the walls".

The west windows were all gone. They were missing. These are tremendous windows. They were just gone. Broken glass everywhere, the revolving doors were all broken and their glass was gone. Every sprinkler head was going off. I am thinking to myself, how are these sprinkler heads going off? It takes a lot of heat to set off a sprinkler head. It never dawned on me that there was a giant fireball that came through the air of the lobby. I never knew that until later on. The jet fuel actually came down the elevator shaft, blew off all the (elevator) doors and flames rolled through the lobby. That explained all the burnt people and why everything was sooted in the lobby."

<http://www.chiefengineer.org/article.cfm?seqnum1=1029>

Below: WTC Plaza. Left to right: South tower, Marriott Vista Hotel, Fritz Koenig's sculpture "Sphere," North tower with performance stage.



Below: WTC Concourse level. This level (street level) includes the large shopping mall that covered much of the WTC site., not only the tower areas. People who were in the concourse when flight 11 hit but did not feel an explosion may have been far from the north tower. The WTC plaza, one level above, was a large elevated platform.

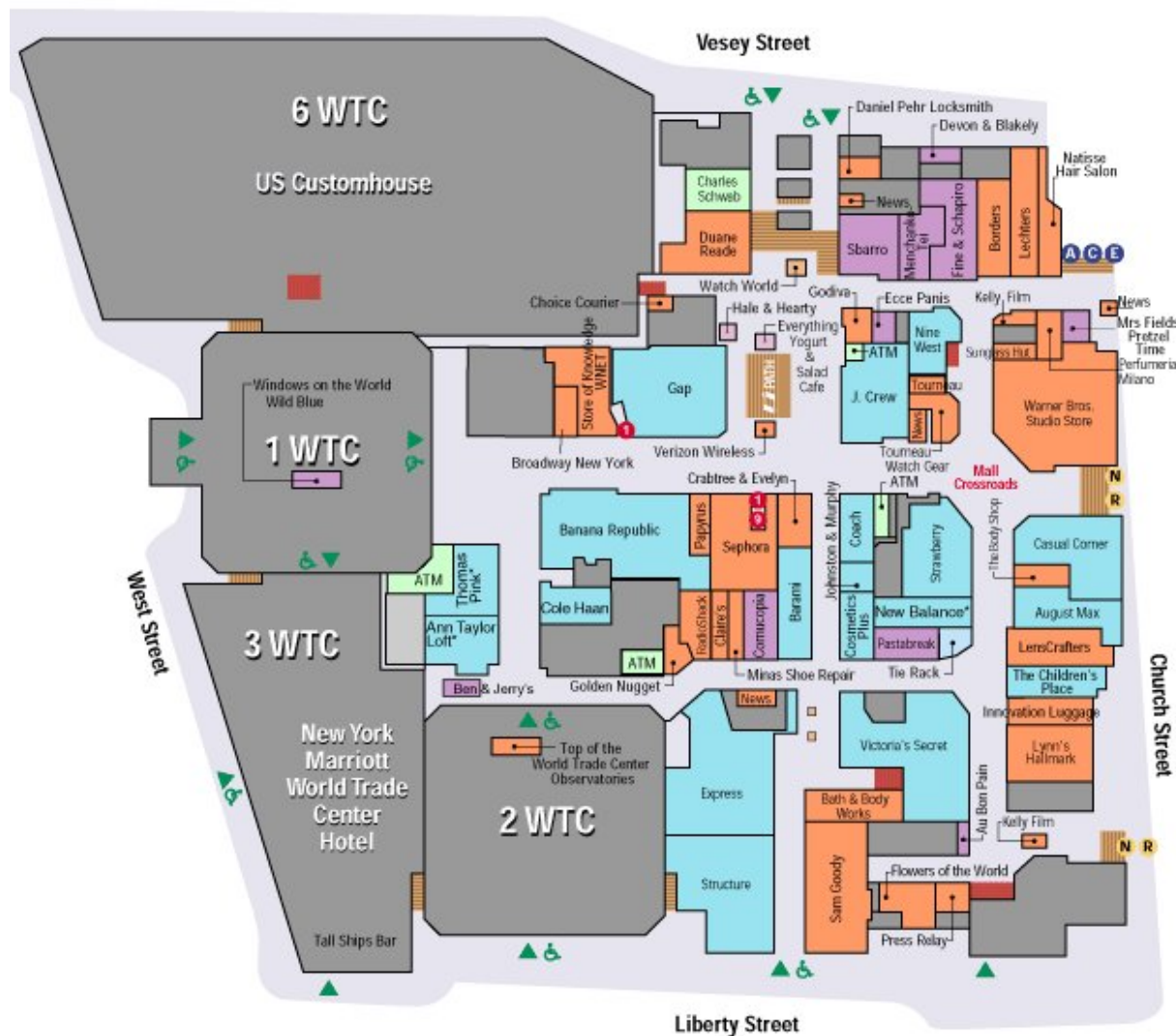


Photo by John Lapriola

Evacuation through lobby

Rescue workers direct evacuees through the lobby of the north tower of the World Trade Center.

Above: Evacuees on escalator from plaza level to concourse level.
Below: Warner Brothers WTC concourse store at Church Street, before and after 9/11.



John Morabito: They turned right onto West Street, nearing the entrance to the north tower. A man — in shock, his clothes on fire — crossed in front of them.

"He's completely engulfed in flames, and he's looking at me because now he thinks I'm going to run him over," Morabito says.

Morabito skidded the truck sideways to stop the man from running and got out as another man came charging off the sidewalk and tackled the burning man, damping out the flames with a jacket. They were 100 feet from the tower entrance.

As Morabito and off-duty firefighter Terry Rivera doused the burn victim, wrapped him in a burn blanket and got him into an ambulance, Lt. Harrell led his inside team, firefighters Tallon and Jeffrey Olsen, into Tower One.

"What we didn't know, and found out later, was that when the plane hit, the jet fuel came down the center elevator shaft, and it lit up in a big fireball in the lobby so that people in the lobby were incinerated," Morabito said. "This man must have been close by and he was burned."

Later, they would learn the burn victim survived. <http://www.fdynytenhouse.com/911/story01.htm>

The Port Authority's on-site commanding police officer was standing in the concourse when a fireball erupted out of elevator shafts and exploded onto the mall concourse, causing him to dive for cover. http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Ch9.htm

Carl Andreason: "Sheetrock fell from the walls," says Andreasen. "Elevator doors were melted and twisted. I knew there must be a terrible fire in the elevator shafts."

<http://www.wels.net/pipermail/voice/2001-October/000047.html>

James Cutler, a 31-year-old insurance broker, was in the Akbar restaurant on the ground floor of the World Trade Center when he heard "boom, boom, boom," he recalls. In seconds, the kitchen doors blew open, smoke and ash poured into the restaurant and the ceiling collapsed. Mr. Cutler didn't know what had happened yet, but he found himself standing among bodies strewn across the floor. "It was mayhem," he says. <http://www.asne.org/index.cfm?ID=3426>

Akbar Emani, owner of Akbar's restaurant: "Last Tuesday at about 8.50 in the morning I got a phone call from one of my employees that the kitchen back wall had come down, and the fire alarm panel, which is located in the back of the store, was also on the floor. And while I was talking to him on the floor, he mentioned to me that the ceiling has also come down a little bit - a part of the ceiling. And that alarmed me, and I asked him to go and call the police. He said that there are no police available over there, and I said that's not possible, because normally there are about 25 to 30 police officers - there is a command post right next to the restaurant. At that time I knew something was terribly wrong, and I asked my general manager to get out of the restaurant immediately - we had about 37 employees. He wanted to stay back and, you know, collect the sales, and, but I asked him, you know, just don't waste your time, I think there is something wrong - let me find out - just get out this minute, right now, and that's what he did." <http://www.abc.net.au/correspondents/s373451.htm>

Tim Pearson, NYPD (After ST collapse): As we're going down, I can see the floor had collapsed. The south tower had collapsed the south side of the north tower. And I see nothing but fire all along there. It's all fire down in the basement concourse, too, where we went in with the swinging doors, where they'll take you out of the plaza. ...Eventually we make a right and go through the middle of the elevator banks, but on the other side of the banks is a big, open area filled with debris and fire. Now I can see, and obviously smell, the jet fuel that had come down the elevator shaft and that was all over the floor." (Smith, Dennis. Report From Ground Zero. New York: Viking Penguin, 2002. p. 137)

The Port Authority's on-site commanding police officer was standing in the concourse when a fireball exploded out of the North Tower lobby, causing him to dive for cover. http://www.9-11commission.gov/staff_statements/staff_statement_13.pdf

Linda Tollner: I was in the World Trade Center headed for a 9:30 meeting on the 72nd floor of Tower One. I was about 15 minutes from getting on the elevator. I was still on the concourse level (ground) when the first plane hit. There was smoke, but people were calmly walking to the exits. We didn't know what happened. Out side was a kind of surreal atmosphere. Lots of debris. I saw the building on fire, big holes, and then ran for cover. When the second plane hit, I was just below and had just walked into the lobby of a building

across the street from the south side of Tower Two where the plane hit. The noise was incredible. There was a lot of panic in there. I thought I was going to be buried by a falling tower. I held on to the people next to me, they were praying. <http://www.engr.psu.edu/ae/WTC/LindaTollner.htm>

Alison Summers: Afterwards, I withdrew some money at the HSBC bank and took the escalator downstairs to the main concourse and joined an incredible throng of people. It was 8:45 am, and thousands were coming to work.

I stopped to get a paper and cut diagonally through the crowd, weaving and dodging my way towards the subway station. I had almost reached the Uptown 1 and 9 station when there was an enormous explosion. The building shook. I heard people say, "Oh, no." Some, not many, were screaming.

We all knew at that moment that we were under a terrorist attack. Most of us assumed it was a bomb.

I looked ahead past Banana Republic, past Citibank to the plaza outside. At that moment, there was a terrifying tidal wave of smoke filling the doorway. It began to shoot forward. The smoke had this enormous momentum that started to come towards us, as if it had a will of its own.

We ran. We ran together past the Coach store. We ran to get out of the path of this enormous wave of smoke. It was like we were being chased. All the people on the concourse ran. We turned right, heading toward the PATH trains.

As we ran, shop assistants were calling in doorways, "What happened? What happened?" But we were running so fast we couldn't answer them and they ran with us. Some people were crying; some people were screaming.

We moved as one body. No one pushed and no one shoved. We all had the same intention: to get out of the building. <http://nymag.com/news/articles/wtc/accounts.htm>

S. Alexander: My normal commute involves taking the PATH train from New Jersey to WTC in New York. I reached WTC around 8:57 am and as soon as the doors opened we were engulfed by some chemical that smelled like kerosene and smoke. Not realizing what had happened I walked up the escalator to the ground floor of the WTC where Police officers were directing all commuters to leave the building as soon as possible. Emerging outside of WTC, it looked like a bomb had exploded because there was debris everywhere, paper, fibre-glass insulation and numerous other office stationary material. In my mind I recalled the bombing from 1993 and thought this was something very similar. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/1544197.stm

Basement Levels

Basement, level unknown.

Bobby Hall, ABM: The engineering crew often worked in lower level mechanical rooms near the ventilation and elevator shafts of the complex. Jet fuel flowed down those shafts, causing explosions and fires near those rooms.

Bobby Hall, of Staten Island, was near a mechanical room floor 50 feet underground when the impact of a falling elevator threw him against a steel door. He struggled to his feet, and assisted two other injured men. Outside, he borrowed a cell phone from a man on the plaza to call his wife. Moments later, the man was killed by falling debris, Hall said. http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/specials/911/showcase/ny-nystaf092916637sep09_0.1597086.story?page=2&track=sto-relcon

"We were going to our shop to make a call and find out what the first explosion was and the place just came apart on us," Bobby said. "What we found out later was the hot wind was the number 50 freight car falling from the 88th floor and it just came into the area where we were and just blew us back out into the parking lot." http://www.911ea.org/News_Stories_From_September_2002.htm

Basement, level unknown

Kenneth Johannemann, ABM Janitorial Services (Note: this quote gives the impression that Johannemann was on the 30th floor. He wasn't, as he says in the video that follows the quotes.)

My shift is from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. I'm always on time, but today I got lucky because I went to the 30th floor to get a cup of coffee. If I hadn't gotten that cup of coffee, I would have been blown up on the elevator. I was waiting by the elevator to go to the restrooms, and then there was a big bang, and the whole building shook. The elevator door flew open, and a guy stumbled out, and he was badly burned. He was a delivery guy. The skin from his wrist was hanging down past his fingertips. <http://www.abm.com/ilwcm/resources/file/eb000c0fdc64a5c/Alliance-911.pdf>

Kenny Johannemann was in the number one tower of the World Trade centre, waiting for the elevator in the basement.

It was shift-change time, the time of day when the building is most crowded.

"The lift door exploded open. there was a man inside half burnt. His skin was hanging off.

"I dragged him out of the lift and somebody helped me get him out for the building. <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/08/23/1030052968600.html>

Johannemann video:

"What happened was, I was down in the basement, all of sudden we heard a loud bang. And the elevator doors blew open, some guy was burnt up, so I dragged him out, his skin was all hanging off, so I dragged him out and pulled him outta the parking lot [inaudible]" See video: <http://tinyurl.com/8qay5>

Basement, level unknown.

Male: (inaudible) try to round up anyone that was in subgrade. I'm with Tony, and Myron, and Petri, and Phil, right now. PA Transcript,

WTC channel 25 Radio Channel B – Maintenance and Electric (p. 8)

B1 Level, about 5 minutes after north tower impact

Male: (Inaudible) B-1 level, One World Trade Center. It's (inaudible), we had a minor explosion or a major explosion, something happened down here.

Male: Roger, there was an explosion on the upper floors. PA transcript 047 – WTC Radio Channel 26 Radio Channel W – Police

Basement (or lobby?)

One particular memory sticks with Pecoraro: He was in the lobby of the north tower when the force of the south tower collapse knocked him over and separated him from colleague Arthur DelBianco. (Note: DelBianco says he was in the basement when the south tower collapsed.)

It was very dark and quiet, he said, except for the feathery descent of ash and dust. He thought he was alone. "As soon as I hit the flashlight button, people were all over me," he said. "They were yanking on my shirt. They had their hands in my mouth. I turned the flashlight off."

Pecoraro found a cluster of firefighters. "They asked me who I was," he said. "I said I'm an engineer in the building. They said 'Good. How the -- do we get out of here?'"

Meanwhile, DelBianco was buried in debris. "I said to myself, I'm dead," DelBianco recalled. "I can't believe I died. And it was so dark I thought I went to the wrong place. I thought I had been a good guy."

From the floor, he grabbed a firefighter and asked for help. The firefighter said, "Let go, let go. I got to get out," DelBianco recalled. "He's beating my hand. I'm holding on."

The duo staggered out, collecting other injured people along the way, one person gripping the next.

DelBianco finally found Pecoraro and they embraced. "He's crying. I tell him, look at us. We worked together 15 years, and we fought every day." [Source](#)

Basement, when south tower collapses (Note: according to Cruz, she was removed by co-workers after about 40 minutes of lying injured in the basement. It is unlikely that she was running anywhere.)

Arthur DelBianco, ABM: They rushed people into the cramped elevator and rode down to the lobby. But that wasn't enough for DelBianco. He had to find his coworkers in the basement and make sure they got out, too. As people ran from the building, he descended into the subterranean levels. It was dark. The sprinklers sprayed ice-cold water. Ceiling tiles collapsed. Somehow, DelBianco found his friends, carpenter Marlene Cruz and mechanic Hursley Lever. They were running through the chaos when something exploded. "The blast came from behind us and just pushed us down," DelBianco said. "We just slid like 25 or 50 feet." DelBianco's calm demeanor gave way to terror as his shoulder separated and his knee shattered. "I just started screaming at the tops of my lungs. The noise was so loud. I kept saying, 'Oh, my God, this is it. This is the day that I'm going to die.'" Then salvation. A firefighter stepped on him in the dark. DelBianco reached up and grabbed his belt. "I just thought, 'Hang on.'" The firefighter hoisted DelBianco to his feet. But he had no idea how to get out of the dark labyrinth. DelBianco had to lead the way. Together, they limped to safety. <http://www.abm.com/ilwwcm/resources/file/eb000c0fdc64a5c/Alliance-911.pdf>

Basement: level unknown

A survivor in the basement: "I saw a big bright orange color coming through the basement with the smoke ... A fire ball came shooting out of the basement door." [Interview 100760 \(NIST 2004\) http://www.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-7.pdf](http://www.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1-7.pdf)

B1 level: William Rodriguez

CNN live broadcast, September 11, 2001: "RODRIGUEZ: I was in the basement, which is the support floor for the maintenance company, and we hear like a big rumble. Not like an impact, like a rumble, like moving furniture in a massive way. And all of sudden we hear another rumble, and a guy comes running, running into our office, and all of skin was off his body. All of the skin." <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0109/11/bn.24.html>

Quoted by CNN 9/12/01: "We heard a loud rumble, then all of a sudden we heard another rumble like someone moving a whole lot of furniture," Rodriguez said. "and then the elevator opened and a man came into our office and all of his skin was off." <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/11/new.york.terror/>

CNN broadcast aired September 11, 2002: And at that terrible day when I took people out of the office, one of them totally burned because he was standing in front of the freight elevator and the ball of fire came down the duct of the elevator itself, I put him on the ambulance. <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0209/11/se.48.html>

But since he was late, Rodriguez found himself checking into work in an office on sub-level 1 when the north tower was hit, seemingly out of harms way. However, the sound and concussion of a massive explosion in the sub-levels right below his feet changed that.

"When I heard the sound of the explosion, the floor beneath my feet vibrated, the walls started cracking and it everything started shaking," said Rodriguez, who was huddled together with at least 14 other people in the office.

Rodriguez said Anthony Saltamachia, supervisor for the American Maintenance Co., was one of the people in the room who stands ready to verify his story.

"Seconds after the first massive explosion below in the basement still rattled the floor, I hear another explosion from way above," said Rodriguez. "Although I was unaware at the time, this was the airplane hitting the tower, it occurred moments after the first explosion."

But before Rodriguez had time to think, co-worker Felipe David stormed into the basement office with severe burns on his face and arms, screaming for help and yelling "explosion! explosion! explosion!"

David had been in front of a nearby freight elevator on sub-level 1 about 400 feet from the office when fire burst out of the elevator shaft, causing his injuries.

"He was burned terribly," said Rodriguez. "The skin was hanging off his hands and arms. His injuries couldn't have come from the airplane above, but only from a massive explosion below. I don't care what the government says, what scientists say. I saw a man burned terribly from a fire that was caused from an explosion below.

"I know there were explosives placed below the trade center. I helped a man to safety who is living proof, living proof the government story is a lie and a cover-up." <http://www.arcticbeacon.com/24-Jun-2005.html>

B1 or B2 levels:

Felipe David, who had been standing in front of a freight elevator on sub level 1:

"Standing in front of a freight elevator on sub level 1 near the office where Rodriguez and 14 others were huddled together when the explosion erupted below, David said in the taped interview:

"That day I was in the basement in sub-level 1 [note: Rodriguez says David was on B2, and came up the stairs to get to the office] sometime after 8:30am. Everything happened so fast, everything moved so fast. The building started shaking after I heard the explosion below, dust was flying everywhere and all of a sudden it got real hot.

"I threw myself onto the floor, covered my face because I felt like I was burned. I sat there for a couple of seconds on the floor and felt like I was going to die, saying to myself 'God, please give me strength.'"

Although severely burned on his face, arms and hands with skin hanging from his body like pieces of cloth, David picked himself up, running for help to the office where Rodriguez and others were gathered."

"When I went in, I told them it was an explosion," said David, who was then helped out of the WTC by Rodriguez and eventually taken by ambulance to New York Hospital. "When people looked at me with my skin hanging, they started crying but I heard others say 'OK, good, good, you made it alive.'" <http://www.arcticbeacon.com/articles/13-Jul-2005.html>

In 2002, David described that incident differently, but it sounds as though he's exaggerating a bit (I don't think there's any doubt about him being helped by William Rodriguez and others, and six blocks to find an exit simply makes no sense):

"When the first plane crashed, David was taking inventory of the vending machines in the center's basement. "I asked God to give me strength. And I was able to get up and run six blocks to find an exit," he says." http://www.thelutheran.org/article/article.cfm?article_id=4447

Rodriguez visits David in the hospital in this video (in Spanish):<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65aft8XIlk>

In the video, Rodriguez blames Osama bin Laden for causing his "great pain," and David calls bin Laden an "animal."

B2 Level

Male: ASAP, six-three, be advised, I have two ABM workers down here on the B2 between the red and the yellow lots.

Male: Where do you need the assistance for the ABM workers?

Male: B2 between the red lot, and the yellow lot, the walkway where the ABM office is. WTC Ch, 22 SHO PD Desk – 2131 (P. 4)

B2 Level

Female: (inaudible) be advised, there is so much smoke on B2 west, we're evacuating and we're coming up! WTC Ch, 22 SHO PD Desk – 2131 (P. 14)

B1 to B3 level

In the taped interview, (Salvatore) Giambanco told Gurisatti, the Colombian reporter:

"We heard the explosion and the smoke all of a sudden came from all over. There was an incredible force of wind that also swept everything away. I remember hearing a scream of a woman, but I couldn't see her. I had just gotten off the elevator and I was standing by it with another man but didn't know his name.

"The doors of the elevator were still open and, I don't know why we did, but we both jumped back in maybe because of the wind whipping everything around in the hallway. "Then, suddenly, the elevator doors closed in front of us and we started going down. It all of a sudden stopped and I could see through the cracks we were between B-2 and B-3. We were both screaming and afraid. I remember seeing through the slot of the elevator and seeing other people running and screaming.

"Then water started gushing in the elevator and I remember saying, 'God, please help us.' At that point, I was resigned to the fact I was going to die"

But like a miracle, Giambanco's plea to God was answered as all of a sudden he heard someone yelling from above, "How many people are down there?"

The miracle above turned out to be Rodriguez who had returned into the WTC after helping David to safety in order to help others after disobeying police orders to remain outside.

"I remember rushing past police, telling them to go to hell as I was going back to help my friends no matter what," recalls Rodriguez about his basement search for survivors before eventually only making his way to the 39th floor before being turned back in a desperate attempt to reach the top floors.

In the basement, Rodriguez managed to find a construction ladder, miraculously lowering it into the elevator after courageously entering the darkened shaft and opening the top hatch on the elevator where Giambanco and the other unidentified man now were standing thigh-deep in water from the broken or activated sprinkler system spewing water into the elevator shaft.

"I don't know he did it, but I felt him just pick me up and pull me out," said Giambanco about Rodriguez's rescue efforts. "I didn't know who he was then, but I do now and he definitely saved my life. If it wasn't for William Rodriguez, I wouldn't be here today."

"For me, William is like my brother. He single handedly saved my life." [Note: Rodriguez did have help.] <http://www.arcticbeacon.citymaker>.

com/articles/article/1518131/29110.htm

Giambanco:

"I threw myself on the hospital floor in tears and I finally had to get an injection to calm me down," said Giambanco. "For a long time after, every time I would try to go to sleep I would get nightmares about being trapped in the elevator." Reflecting back on his 9/11 near death experience, he added: "I remember riding in the ambulance that morning and looking back, thinking it had to be a bomb." Later they told me it was an airplane that hit the towers, but how could it just be an airplane? I know all the newspapers were saying that, but it was just too incredible to believe if you heard and experienced what I did. It had to be a bomb." <http://proliberty.com/observer/20050716.htm>

B1 level

Radio Channel Y – Port Authority Radio Transcript WTC Operations (PA 049)

Willy: (Inaudible) is injured, I'm inside the building with uh...(inaudible). We're helping some people stuck inside the elevator (inaudible).

John: Willy, what floor are you on, Willy?

Willy: We are in the B1 office right now, on the K car.

Male: Willy, get out of the office and come outside on Church Street.

Willy: Copy, as soon as we get these people out, we're getting them out now.

Male: Willy, I want you to go right to Church Street and Liberty! Get to Liberty and Broadway!

Willy: You got it. <http://www.thememoryhole.org/911/pa-transcripts/pa-transcript049.pdf>

B1 level

Ivan Almendarez was a maintenance worker in Building 1 of the World Trade Center. 'I usually work on the concourse, but I was in the basement, charging up my radio and getting some supplies, when the first plane hit,' Ivan said.

'The impact was so great, everything just paused. I looked up and waited for the ceiling to collapse. When I saw the whole building move, and the walls were still standing, I thought the ceiling would collapse on us. So, we all threw ourselves under the tables.

'My supervisor and I helped a worker out. He was so badly burned. It was terrible. He had no skin on his face or his hands,' Ivan said. <http://911digitalarchive.org/seiu/details/41>

B1-B2 levels

Arturo Griffith, elevator operator, in freight car 50A with carpenter Marlene Cruz:

Arturo Griffith, a Panamanian, was in a lift at the time of the impact. The whole car shook and juddered as he heard an ominous noise from above. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20010918/ai_n14406873

Arturo Griffith was in a freight elevator when the building was attacked. The elevator dropped to B1 (the basement level), fell below the landing. He was trapped in the elevator beneath debris and unconscious. He remembers seeing a beam of light. He called out. The smoke was so thick; Arturo could not see his own hand. So his rescuers had to follow his voice to find him.

'I don't know who saved me. It was so black and smoky. I couldn't see nothin', Arturo said. 'When they got me out, I told them there was someone else down there, a woman. They went back to get her. Seconds after they pulled her out, a ball of fire came down the shaft. They almost got killed.'

<http://911digitalarchive.org/seiu/details/54>

"I felt the explosion and the elevator dropped," Arturo said at St. Vincents Hospital in Manhattan, where he's being treated for a broken leg. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4161/is_20010916/ai_n14537022

B1-B2 levels

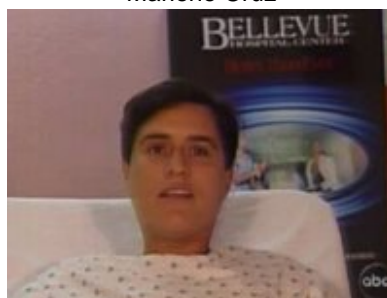
Marlene Cruz: I work for the Trade Center. I'm one of the carpenters, and I was gonna go do a job, and I got on the elevator – the freight elevator – and I heard the first explosion, and the elevator blew up, and the doors blew up, and it dropped. I was lucky that the elevator got caught between two floors, the "B" levels, the basement floors, you know, where all the mechanics are. And with the screaming and yelling the coworkers pulled the elevator guy out and myself.

...When I heard that explosion, the first thing I thought was, "Here we go again: another bomb." [she had survived the 1993 bombing] She was laying there for about 40 minutes, waiting for EMS. Finally her co-workers removed her via the parking lot and Barclay Street. Watch video: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=TSGZYP--wz0>

Survivors held to their spirit, like Marlene Cruz, who sported a neck brace, a leg cast and an unbroken will. "I wouldn't let a terrorist stop me," she said at Bellevue Hospital. "If the building were still there, I would go back." http://www.firehouse.com/terrorist/13_APdig.html

Mike (Pecoraro) walked through the open doorway and found two people lying on the floor. One was a female Carpenter and the other an Elevator Operator. They were both badly burned and injured. <http://www.flyingsnail.com/Dahbud/911engineer.html>

Marlene Cruz



B4 level: blast 30 seconds after building movement.

Edward McCabe, building engineer, describes blast at Turner Construction's Field Office in the tower core. (divided into paragraphs for legibility, spelling and grammar left as is): I was in the refrigeration plant in tower 1 sub basement 4. I was passing through when I felt a slight shifting of the building. I froze right where I stood and listened....nothing.. about 30 seconds past and to my left about 30 feet from me was a stairway leading up to a door. this door explodes off its hinges and white smoke came into the plant.

I later on found out the reason there was an explosion was the jet fuel filled the elevator shaft and seconds later a spark triggered an explosion. i stood at the bottom of this staircase wondering what happened. seconds later through the smoke came people who worked beyond that door for the construction company. they were all secretaries, they walked like zombies not speaking *I can smell their burnt flesh*. one was bleeding pretty bad and i started to walk her to path train station accross the plant. 1 woman seemed unharmed and i asked her what happened. she told me a bomb blew up their offices.

when we got to the PATH platform i layed the woman down, she thanked me, and i returned to the blown door to see if i could find anyone else. Sure enough there were more, the smoke was being sucked up the shaft now and i can see there were no longer any walls just rubble. 1 woman was under her desk refusing to come out. after a little coaxing she came and at this point a few of my colleuges, were sifting through the rubble, trying to find anybody. we did about 3 trips. everyone was out.

i returned to the plant and called for ems on the radio (walky talky), I couldn't get through there was chaos on the radio. I switched on the am radio we had in the plant to the all news station and heard "ONCE AGAIN A PLANE HAS HIT THE 86 FLOOR OF ONE WORLD TRADE CENTER". my heart sunk. I said to my self lets get the fuck outta here.

i started running towards the area where we had brought the injured when i see about 9 fire men running my way. they approached me an asked "where are we getting all these people from." I told them over there pointing about 25 yards away to the staircase with the blown door. they asked me to show them exactly where and I told them "there is no one left lets get the hell outta here", they told me to calm down and lead them to the offices beyond the blown door. I said "ok lets do this " so we start running for the stairs as we started to ascend the lights went out just the little exit signs over the doors were illuminated. I started to panic. (I found out later on the lights were lost when the second plane hit.)

not one of the firemen had a freakin flashlight, I couldn't believe it, i guess in all this chaos they forgot them. the firemen in charge said to me, "wait here we will be right back", and just like that they all ran back the way they came. Not 1 of them stayed behind.

I stood there at the bottom of those stairs scared shitless ,in the dark, listening to the eery sound of the smoke sucking up that elevator shaft. Maybe a minute passed when I said to myself "what am I a fuckin' idiot." and proceeded to run past the area where we brought the injured in path station, EMS was taking care of them and for that i was thankful. <http://911digitalarchive.org/stories/details/936>

B4 level (possibly Edward McCabe)

MALE CALLER- B-4 LEVEL: Officer, help. We're down in the B-4 level. This is Turner's field office. There's been a big explosion. We've got water lines open. There seems to be steam and smoke in the area.

MALE CALLER- B-4 LEVEL: It's...yeah, we got smoke. I don't know whether it's from fire, or just dust. We got broken water lines, water all over. http://www.firehouse.com/news/wtcscrips/wtc_channel8.pdf

0853 4-1 radios WTC Police Desk reporting an explosion on the lower level.

0853 WTC Desk replies there was an explosion on the upper floors

0857 WTC requests an available unit to check Turner Construction, 1 WTC B-4 Level, report of broken water pipes.

0901 PO Houston, PO Davis and PO Wholey start to evacuate the B-4 Level, 1 WTC.

0911 PO Houston, PO Davis and PO Wholey are clear of the B-4 level. PO Houston asks, "Where do you need us?" WTC Police Desk responds the 90th and the 22nd floors.

0912 PO Houston, PO Davis and PO Wholey advise Police Desk of trapped ABM workers on the B-4 level, as per a report from an ABM worker. The desk acknowledges. (Port Authority Transcript, Chronological Report of the WTC Radio Transmissions on 9/11/01, P. 2) [PAPD officers Clinton Davis and Michael Wholey died on 9/11]

B4 Level

Ed Calderone, OCC: Maggett, this is Ed at the OCC. I got word that there's an explosion down on B-4. We got people hurt down there, B-4. PA Transcript, WTC Ch 09 Police desk 3541 Center

B4 Level (After 24:40 on tape)

Male: Roger, T-C World Trade, be advised, (inaudible) from ABM he got (inaudible) assistance from ...he got (inaudible) assistance from the B-4 level.

Male: Roger, be advised, (inaudible), I got a ABM worker, myself, and two other people (inaudible) A-2 David, we're going to go down to the B-4 level. The ABM guy says that he's got (inaudible) from some guys down there, they're trapped downstairs. We are going to check and advise, copy? PA transcript 047 – WTC Radio Channel 26 Radio Channel W – Police

B4 Level

Male: (inaudible) seven-seven, we need the EMS; by the classroom, B-4 plant.

Male: It's, uh...both shops, they got people down there. You can't go down there, because there's smoke. PA Ch. 15 – NYC EMS Direct Line (p. 10)

B4 Level

(Pg. 4, After 3:21 from start of tape.) Male: (inaudible) ...We're down at the B-4 level in (Overlap/Inaudible)...field office...

Male: ...seen...the fucking area...(inaudible)

Male: **They're across the hall from the 50 car.**

Male: Are there any smoke conditions there?

Male: Yeah, we got smoke. I don't know whether it's (inaudible) soot or whether it's dust, but we got smoke and water lines...(inaudible) ...Building One. PA Transcript, PA Ch. 15 – NYC EMS Direct Line

B4 level

In the 2002 taped statement, (Jose) Sanchez recalls, at the same time Rodriguez and the others heard the explosion, being in a small sub-level 4 workshop with another man who he only knew by the name of Chino when, out of nowhere, the blast sounded as the two men were cutting a piece of metal.

"It sounded like a bomb and the lights went on and off," said Sanchez in the tape recording. "We started to walk to the exit and a huge ball of fire went through the freight elevator. The hot air from the ball of fire dropped Chino to the floor and my hair got burned," said Sanchez in the tape recording. "The room then got full of smoke and I remember saying out loud 'I believe it was a bomb that blew up inside the building.' <http://www.rinf.com/news/july-05/14a.html>

B4 level

Phillip Morelli: "As I'm walking by the main freight car of the building, in the corridor, that's when I got blown. I mean, the impact of the explosion, of whatever happened, it threw me to the floor, and that's when everything started happening. It knocked me right to the floor. Of course you didn't know what it was, you're assuming something just fell over in the loading dock, something very heavy, something very big. You don't know what happened, and all of a sudden you just felt the floor moving, and you get up, and the walls – and then, you know now I'm hearing that the main freight car, you know the elevators, fell down, so I was right near the main freight car, so I assume what that was. [Describing the same event] Then, you know, you heard that coming towards you, I was racing, I was going towards the bathrooms, you know, all of a sudden, and a big impact happened again, and all the ceiling tiles were falling down, the light fixtures falling, swinging out of the ceiling.

And I come running out of the door, and everything – the walls were down, and now I started running towards the parking lot. [He describes going underground from WTC 1 to 2, helping injured people.] And then all of a sudden it happened all over again. Building 2 got hit. Again, I don't know that, I just know something else hit into the floor. Right in the basement you felt it. Walls were caving in, everything that was going on. I mean, I know people that got killed in the basement, I know people that got broken legs in the basement, people that got reconstructive surgery because the walls hit them in the face."

Video: http://www.ny1.com/pages/RRR/911special_survivors.html

B5 Level

Male: yeah, we need the electrician down to the B-5 plant. We also have a smoke condition down here. PA Transcript, WTC channel 25 Radio Channel B – Maintenance and Electric

B6 level

Deep below the tower, Mike Pecoraro was suddenly interrupted in his grinding task by a shake on his shoulder from his co-worker. "Did you see that?" he was asked. Mike told him that he had seen nothing. "You didn't see the lights flicker?", his co-worker asked again. "No," Mike responded, but he knew immediately that if the lights had flickered, it could spell trouble. A power surge or interruption could play havoc with the building's equipment. If all the pumps trip out or pulse meters trip, it could make for a very long day bringing the entire center's equipment back on-line.

Mike told his co-worker to call upstairs to their Assistant Chief Engineer and find out if everything was all right. His co-worker made the call and reported back to Mike that he was told that the Assistant Chief did not know what happened but that the whole building seemed to shake and there was a loud explosion. They had been told to stay where they were and "sit tight" until the Assistant Chief got back to them. By this time, however, the room they were working in began to fill with a white smoke. "We smelled kerosene," Mike recalled, "I was thinking maybe a car fire was upstairs", referring to the parking garage located below grade in the tower but above the deep space where they were working.

The two decided to ascend the stairs to the C level, to a small machine shop where Vito Deleo and David Williams were supposed to be working. When the two arrived at the C level, they found the machine shop gone.

"There was nothing there but rubble," Mike said. "We're talking about a 50 ton hydraulic press – gone!" [Note: "50 tons" refers to the hydraulic capacity of the press, not to its weight. An average 50-ton press weighs 400-600 lbs. [Here's an example](#). It seems likely to me that Pecoraro is referring to the press being buried by debris.] The two began yelling for their co-workers, but there was no answer. They saw a perfect line of smoke streaming through the air. "You could stand here," he said, "and two inches over you couldn't breathe. We couldn't see through the smoke so we started screaming." But there was still no answer.

The two made their way to the parking garage, but found that it, too, was gone. "There were no walls, there was rubble on the floor, and you can't see anything" he said. <http://www.chiefengineer.org/article.cfm?seqnum1=1029>

Unknown location, radio transmission:

Firefighter Vincent Massa: The dispatcher announced that the elevators were dropping. I remember them saying at first to stay out of one of the elevators that serviced the 44th floor. Then less than a minute later they said do not use any elevators. ...He said to stay out of all elevators because elevators were dropping. http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110222.PDF

Unknown location:

I even heard some radio transmissions about fire in the elevator shafts from the jet fuel. –FDNY Captain Charles Clarke http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/9110250.PDF

Unknown location:

9:12: WTC Police Desk radios PO Lim/K-9 asking if that is the smell of jet fuel. PO Lim/K-9 replies, "That's burning jet fuel." <http://www.thememoryhole.org/911/pa-transcripts/pa-police-reports01.pdf> pg. 6

Unknown location, after 42:07 on tape

Male: Be advised, if EMS is available, I have an engine (sic) person that has some minor burns and injuries, due to a falling elevator. PA Transcript, PA Ch. 15 – NYC EMS Direct Line

Below: WTC basement lower levels



[Next: Inside the South Tower: Witness Accounts, All Floors](#)

Inside the South Tower: Eyewitness Accounts

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Still others remained alive in the impact zone above the 78th floor. Damage was extensive, and conditions were highly precarious. The only survivor known to have escaped from the heart of the impact zone [Stanley Praisman] described the 81st floor-where the wing of the plane had sliced through his office-as a "demolition" site in which everything was "broken up" and the smell of jet fuel was so strong that it was almost impossible to breathe. This person escaped by means of an unlikely rescue, aided by a civilian fire warden descending from a higher floor [Brian Clark], who, critically, had been provided with a flashlight. – *9/11 Commission Report*, Chapter 9

The loss of life was almost complete inside the south tower's 10 giant express elevators, which were shuttling evacuees from the 78th floor to the ground floor after the north tower was hit. Only four people survived.

The four survivors — two each from adjacent elevators — were in elevators that plunged and were stopped by the emergency brakes 6 to 10 feet above the lobby floor. About 40 people died in those two elevators. Doomed passengers called loved ones from two other south tower express elevators stuck near the 12th floor in one case and the 19th floor in another. [Source](#)

Floor unknown

Even as people streamed down the stairs, the cracks were appearing in the walls as the building shuddered and cringed. Steam pipes burst, and at one point an elevator door burst open and a man fell out, half burned alive, his skin hanging off. People dragged him out of the elevator and helped get him out of the building to the doctors below. "If I had listened to the announcement," says survivor Joan Feldman, "I'd be dead right now." <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,174655-1,00.html>

84th floor

I was totally surprised. I was in a conversation two to three feet away from a gentleman named Bobby Coll. He had told me that after the first plane hit, he had gone down but with the announcement he had come back up with Kevin York. There was sort of like a double noise, like a bang, thump. With the second thump everything just fell apart in our room. The first noise was the impact; the second noise was the explosion and the shock wave of the fuel igniting. "Accounts From the South Tower" The New York Times, May 26, 2002

84th floor, as 175 hits. Brian Clark:

"It wasn't a huge explosion. It was something muffled, no flames, no smoke, but the room fell apart as the plane kind of torqued the building. Ceiling tiles fell from the ceiling, air conditioning ducts fell, door frames fell out of the wall. (Richard Bernstein: Out of the Blue. New York: Times Books, 2002. p. 222)

78th floor

Kelly Reyher, AON Corporation: The elevator split at the seams, the floor blew up. You could just sort of look right through the corner of the elevator into the elevator shaft and it was just all fire.

So I was able to crawl out. And then when I crawled out you just saw an absolute scene of destruction. Across from me, because when you crawl out you're facing the other elevator bank, they were completely destroyed. There was fire just shooting out those. "Accounts From the South Tower" The New York Times, May 26, 2002

78th floor

Ling Young said she believes she was the last person to escape the tower before it collapsed. She was trying to save her boss, who had suffered a broken leg in the attack.

Young said she was waiting to take an elevator down. When the doors opened, a fireball incinerated several people waiting to get on. She finally made her way to the stairs and out of the building. http://www.greatdreams.com/trade_day9.htm

77th floor

Brian Clark: Somewhere around the 77th floor, the stairway walls were cracked, and you could look through the cracks and see flames. They were just quietly licking up, not a roaring inferno. And there was some smoke there, but again I think the stairs were pressurized, pushing the air out so we had less smoke in the stairway than you might imagine.

77th floor or near

Keat Crown: "...reached a point in the stairwell that had been demolished by an elevator, he jumped down an unknown distance and was able to land with only minor injuries where the stairwell was still useable. At that point, he made his way to the bottom of the building and emerged only minutes before the structure...." <http://www.chronicle.duke.edu/archive/images/2001/09/17/010917online.pdf>

Brian Clark and Stanley Praisman

The two men made a slippery descent down the wet stairs. Occasional cracks in the walls exposed flames within. <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0209/11/se.61.html>

74th floor

"...I sat down with this guy who became my "buddy." Tim's story was that he was on the 86th floor of the second tower, when the plane hit the first tower. They started to evacuate, but after going down a dozen flights they were instructed that it was only the first tower that had been hit and that they could go back. So he was opening the door on the 74th floor at the exact moment that the second plane crashed into the 74th floor. He actually saw the wing before the explosion. He was splashed with jet fuel, but the explosion blew him back into the stairwell, saving his life. With other people helping him, because he was blinded by the jet fuel, he ran down 74 flights of stairs. A medic was lavaging his eyes when the first building fell. <http://www.episcopal-dso.org/pages/int2001/0110jim.htm>

75-70th floor

Joseph Dittmar: Dittmar continued down the stairwell. When he got between the 75th and 70th floors, he said he felt the building sway.

"I've never felt anything like that in all my life. The building literally swayed and shook from side to side," Dittmar said.

Dittmar later would learn that a plane also had crashed into the south tower.

"We immediately smelled the jet fuel," Dittmar said. "And we felt one ball of heat, one ball of heat that just went blowing by us faster than I could say it." <http://www.wtceskp.com/uploads/Kane%20County%20Chronicle%209-7-03.doc>

70th floor, Clyde Ebanks: "I think now, these popping sounds were coming out of the elevator shafts because of the fireball that was coming down. The popping sounds, I think, were the elevator doors opening up because of the fireball." (Richard Bernstein: Out of the Blue. New York: Times Books, 2002. p. 222)



68th floor

Charles Caraher: I started to leave a message and as I did so, the building jolted. The force of it tossed me around my cubicle. I remember thinking, "Finish the message or Catherine will worry." I finished it as quickly as I could. Later that day, I would learn what I said. I said: "Catherine, this is Chaaa-arr-rl-lie. I want to come see you. I want to hold you. And then I want to go home." But at that moment in time, I didn't know what I was saying. I was trying to process what was happening around me. Once again I heard a "whoosh" surging through the ventilation ducts. This one was much, much more pronounced than the first one. It also sounded like large pieces of furniture were being moved across the floor above me.

The building lurched to one side. I thought it wasn't going to stop going in the direction it was going. Then the building started wobbling. This I knew was bad. The thought that I was about to die ran through my head. I was going to die. The building was going to fall over. I was convinced WTC I had fallen into WTC II, my building. I was going to die with no one around me. No one was going to witness my death. It all seemed so meaningless. During all this, I was still on the phone. Throughout the entire message I was leaving for Catherine, the building was moving. It was like my desk was on a platform of Jell-O. Not good when you are 68 floors up.

Then the building stopped wobbling. I stood up, grabbed my briefcase, and headed for the emergency exit. The floors were not right. They looked normal, but I felt I was walking on slanted boards. I saw a colleague come from what I thought was one of the offices, although later I found out he was coming from the coffee room. "Get out, now!" he yelled.

I reached a door leading to a hallway. Through the door's glass window, I saw a mess of what looked like a metal beam or beams, concrete, maybe ceiling debris, a chaos of junk, and it was all on the other side of the fire door. I knew I would not be able to reach the fire escape.

I started thinking, "I'm alive. I want to get out of this building alive." Reevaluating what I might need and worried the briefcase might inhibit my escape, I took out the cigarettes and put them in my pocket. Running back to my desk, I tossed the briefcase on my chair, thinking I could retrieve it in a few weeks. At the time, it wasn't an unreasonable idea. After the bombing in 1993, people were allowed to retrieve their belongings after a few weeks.

Then I headed for the other emergency exit. I reached another door and, as I started to touch the handle to check for heat, I realized I could just barely see through the window on the door. What I saw was a lot of debris and a thick white mist. But I could see the emergency exit and thought I could make a dash through the debris and get to safely to the exit. I succeeded. I reached the fire escape stairs. But as soon as I got in the door, I noticed a huge deep crack in the wall opposite the door. "My God, the building is splitting apart" is what went through my head. The floors and stairs still felt slanted. I went down the stairs as fast as I could. I didn't want to twist an ankle or break a leg, so I was not exactly running. Just moving as fast as I could. No one else came through the emergency door behind me. I passed floor after floor but no one came through the emergency doors on those floors either. I was alone. There was no one behind me. And for awhile, there was no one in front of me. Finally, after several flights, I started to run into people. I think I was somewhere between the 50th and 55th floor when I stopped seeing those giant cracks in the wall. The stairs and landing finally seemed level. But I was still thinking there was a good chance I wouldn't get out alive.

Traffic down the fire escape stairway started getting slower. It was very frustrating. I just wanted to get out of the building. All my senses were telling me we were living on borrowed time.

We reached the 44th floor. The 44th floor was the Sky Lobby and elevator exchange. You had to get off one elevator and get on another if you wanted to go further up – or further down. At this floor, we had to exit our staircase to get to another one. The staircase door was closed. As they came up to it, people stopped, which forced everyone behind them for several flights up to stop as well. The people close to the door didn't know what to do next. They were afraid to open it. No one up front wanted to make a decision. They kept hesitating, and others behind them started getting impatient. Finally, a collective command from a good portion of the crowd forced the issue. We weren't going back up. People started going through the door.

All along the way, women took off their high heels in order to walk down the stairs more easily. Little piles of cast off high heels tossed to the side grew into larger and larger piles the further down we went.

The temperature rose the closer we got to the ground floor. I began to sweat. So did several people around me. I think we were all thinking the same thing – that we were descending into a fire. People carrying briefcases and the growing piles of shoes started making me feel angry. Then my anger dissolved as I realized that no one had expected this, and that I myself had almost carried my briefcase down with me. But adrenaline was still coursing through my body. We couldn't move fast enough. An announcement came over the PA system, informing us that our building was safe and there was no need to panic, but if we wanted to exit the building to go ahead and do so. That got a lot of laughs. People started cracking jokes about it.

Later that evening, there was a wind blowing from the direction of Manhattan. Looking out the living room window, I saw a sheet of 8 1/2 by 11 sheet of paper blowing around in the parking lot. Remembering the paper flying through the air right after the North Tower was hit, I couldn't resist the urge to find out if one of those sheets of paper was in our parking lot. I went outside. I picked it up. Sure enough, it was a sheet of letterhead from a company that had been in the World Trade Center. I held it in my fingers. I smelled smoke and kerosene in its fiber. I read the address. This had been on someone's desk or in some photocopy room. In another life, this piece of paper represented business as usual. <http://911digitalarchive.org/stories/details/20315>

67th floor: blast from below

Tom Elliott: Then, as they reached the 70th floor, they heard an announcement: The building was secure. No one needed to evacuate.

One woman in the small group said to Elliott, "Do you want to believe them? Let's go!"

They had descended three more floors when United Airlines Flight 175 slammed into their own south tower like an arrow from a giant crossbow. It was 9:03 a.m.

Flight 175 had left Logan 15 minutes after American Flight 11. It was also bound for Los Angeles, carrying 56 passengers and nine crew.

Although its spectacularly televised impact was above Elliott, at first he and those around him thought an explosion had come from below. An incredible noise - he calls it an "exploding sound" - shook the building, and a tornado of hot air and smoke and ceiling tiles and bits of drywall came flying up the stairwell.

"In front of me, the wall split from the bottom up," he says.

In a flash of panic, people began fleeing higher into the building. Then a few men began working on the crowd, calming people down, saying that downstairs was the only way out.

As they descended, a few other survivors stumbled into the corridor. A construction painter, his white T-shirt covered in blood, was helped downstairs by others. But the stairwell was still far from jammed with evacuees.

Elliott assumed his was one of the final groups descending. They saw only two firemen going up. They told them there had been an explosion near the 60th floor. [It is unclear who says this] <http://www.csmonitor.com/2001/0917/p1s1-usgn.html>

High 60s, doesn't mention blast from below:

Cara LaTorre : We are in the high 60's when we hear an explosion. The building shakes, the walls begin to crumble and a piece of metal comes flying between us. Oh my god, they bombed our building now! We don't know what to do. The only thing in my mind is that I have to call my husband, Frank, who works nearby to tell him that I am okay. The heat, we could feel the heat. We haven't started to cry yet because we are in shock.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/sept11/2002-09-10-first-person-latorre_x.htm

61st floor when 175 hits

Linda Raisch-Lopez

I reached the 61st floor when there was a tremendous explosion. The building swayed back and forth. I can't even describe the terror I felt as I was thrown into the wall. I screamed and screamed and screamed. A man grabbed me and held me until I calmed down. The lights flickered, there was white smoke everywhere and I saw that a large piece of concrete had fallen on the stairway landing. ...I knew it would collapse. It was inevitable. The building was vibrating and I ran faster and faster. <http://www.911digitalarchive.org/stories/details/9348>

61st floor

"...Jerry Winhoven ...South Tower...training sessions at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter...recess...stayed behind on the 61st floor to check e-mail on a terminal next to the classroom. ...

"Winhoven described the chaos. "There was nothing but papers and documents," flying through the air, he said. "You could literally stick your head through the window. It looked like a bird's-eye view of a ticker tape parade. It was just amazing."

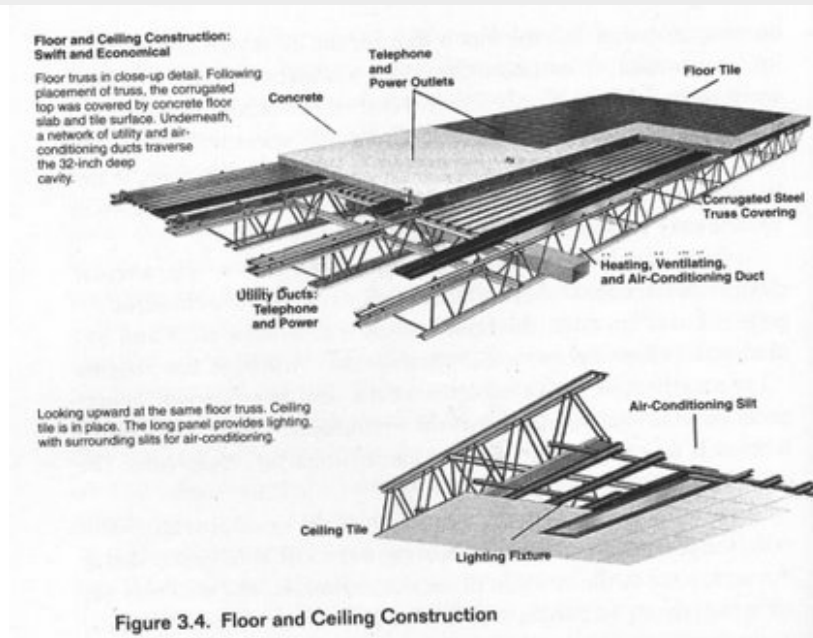
"Winhoven didn't stay long. Smelling what seemed like natural gas, he grabbed his bag and headed for the stairwell. One of the first ones to hit the stairs, Winhoven made it to the 40th floor before the stairwell became crowded with people going down. http://www.courttv.com/assault_on_america/firstperson_ctv.html

54th floor

"Mattox": "They came over a loudspeaker there and were giving us some general instructions," he said. "They said there was some sort of problem in Building 1. I can't remember exactly. No more than five or 10 seconds after they made that announcement, the second plane hit our building.

It shook the building and metal beams actually started flying out of the wall. The ceiling started collapsing, and you could see the walls just crinkling. At that point, it was pandemonium. We were just breathless." <http://www.roanoke.edu/responds-rt.htm>

Ceiling and floor construction



53rd floor

Jack Alvo: I felt the impact of the explosion that I believed was at my feet. I heard the crashing glass around me as the building rocked. My hands began to shake and my knees buckled. I knew I could not stay where I was and I had to go lower. I made my way to the stairs, passing people along the way. I saw the horror and the fear in several faces as I went by them. I still believed the impact was at my feet and as I descended past floor 50 and floor 40 I was sure I was going to see disaster. http://www.aish.com/societyWork/society/One_Mans_Escape.asp

"She Was On The 92nd floor of the World Trade Center" by Josh Gilbert

"... my neighbor Jennifer's story.... Jennifer was on the 92nd floor of 2 World Trade Center on Tuesday morning. She looked out her window and saw a plane flying low and directly toward the building.

"That plane is flying too low," she said.

"No one seemed to notice. "That plane is flying too low," she repeated, adding, "And it's flying right at us."

"people started paying attention and watched in mounting horror as the American eagle plane flew close enough to their building for them to read the letters on the side of the plane. Suddenly, at the last moment, it veered and smashed into the tower next to them.

"They heard a loud, thundering explosion and heard the whoosh of air sucked in by the vacuum. Smoke and flames shot out all around them outside their windows. Chaos ensued. People started screaming and running toward the stairwell.

"Jennifer joined the rush to safety, making it down to the 52nd floor when, as she put it, "Some jackass started yelling up at us through a bullhorn saying: "This tower has been secured. You are in America. Return to your offices!"

"People stopped briefly to process the message. It made no sense, but then what did? They'd just seen a commercial jet fly into the world trade center after almost crashing straight into their office. Jennifer and her colleague wondered briefly if they should heed the advice of the bullhorn wielding moron when the second plane struck their building. A gigantic blast of hot air shot up the stairwell with the vacuum created by the blast and the chaos returned in a hellish instant. They turned around and ran up the steps to the 55th floor, which allowed floor access, and ran across a hallway on that floor to a stairwell on the other side of the building where they managed to climb down to safety...." <http://www.mrbellersneighborhood.com/sec9/shewason>

Middle floors

Art: I was not sure if there was another plane or a bomb and furthermore did not know if the fire and explosion was above or below me. All I did know was that it was getting very hot and I could smell the fire and see smoke coming up the stairwell. <http://www.sharedexperience.org/wtc/experienceedit.lasso?VisitorRole=&CommentGeneral=&Oper=&Skip=6>

44th floor Sky Lobby

James Kazalis: As I took a few steps towards someone I recognized, some great force struck my building. It felt like the floor was being violently pushed under my feet. While falling to the floor, the steady repeating rhythm of time suddenly stopped. I instantly developed tunnel vision and my depth perception did not extend beyond twenty feet. My eyes focused on a nearby out-of-service elevator. The impact had created a shock wave through the entire building that forced dust at a high velocity from all four sides of the elevator doors to the inside of the lobby. I was now prone on the floor. Pandemonium erupted and filled the sky lobby.

...The mezzanine was one floor above the lobby level but was at the same level as the outside Plaza. I was being directed by a security guard to descend to the lobby level via the escalator. The escalator power was turned off. There was a delay here because of the amount of people at this level were from multiple stairwells. While I was waiting for my turn, I looked outside in the Plaza. This was the same area I had walked through moments earlier on my way to work. I could not recognize anything. Everything was charred, smoldering or on fire. Debris was everywhere. At that exact moment I saw an outside support beam about 20 to 30 feet long, hit the ground. Each end of the polished steel beam alternately hit the ground until it stopped. Both ends of that steel support were on fire. <http://www.911digitalarchive.org/stories/details/9393>

44th floor Sky Lobby elevators



Below 44th floor on 175 impact

Joy Shepard: "When it hit, it just jolted the whole stairway. You could smell the jet fuel. A crack appeared in the wall. Smoke filled the stairwell. The skylight above us blew out of the building." http://talkwisdom.blogspot.com/2006_09_01_archive.html

25th floor

Eric S. Levine: Somewhere around the 25th floor, we began to smell jet fuel and a lot of it. I have asthma and it began to become a little difficult to breathe but by the 15th floor it became unbearable due to the amount of smoke that was now entering the stairwell. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/americas/2001/day_of_terror/eyewitness/7.stm

25th floor on 175 impact

Am now holding onto our room's door... clinging to it as if my life depended on it... as the building was still swaying violently... I hear and see more "smaller" explosions....electricity was cut off...more debris... broken glasses... air gushing in... ceiling was slowly caving in... <http://www.e-pix.com/wtc/wtcacct.html>

ST floor Unknown

"...John Howard, who works at Morgan Stanley, on the 60th floor of 2 World Trade Center, said the plane's crash into Building 1 shook his offices. During the evacuation, he said, there was a guy with a bullhorn telling them to stop.

"...He was telling us, 'Don't panic!' saying that we we're safer in the building than leaving it," Howard said. "As he was saying that, there was a huge explosion right there. It was surreal. People were in a full-fledged panic. We all ran over the guy with the bullhorn to get out." ... <http://www.newsday.com/ny-nyeye122362105sep12.story>

South Tower lobby

At this moment, Sun got a phone call from her husband, Zhang Kening, who works in Jamaica, caught the CNN headline news, which covered the air strike almost at the same time. "He told me to calm down, and evacuate from the building immediately," she said. ... When she reached the lobby, she discovered that all the eight elevators had crashed. "I don't know how many people were trapped in there," she said.

"In the lobby, quite a few pieces of granite fell off from the wall, from the ceiling. Everyone of them were covered with mud and water. ..." <http://www.mjbarkl.com/locked.htm>

South tower lobby. Security turnstiles for elevator access at left.



South Tower Lobby

The huge body blow of the second impact shook loose the elevator car in which Lauren Smith was travelling, causing it to free-fall for several terrifying seconds before the emergency braking system cut in and brought it to a halt. Word travelled quickly on the stairs that a second plane had hit.

... The occupants of the lift used by Lauren Smith were also jemmmying open the doors, to discover they were just 7 feet above the polished marble of the lobby. Smith jumped, stumbled and fell into the open lift shaft. She was pulled out by firemen with five broken ribs and a punctured lung but made it out before the building collapsed.

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4158/is_20010918/ai_n14406873

South Tower Lobby

Sal Iraci: On the day of the crashes, I was working in the lobby. When the first plane hit, I was out in the truck dock. I went into the lobby to see what happened. We didn't know if it was a bomb or what,' Sal said.

'After the second explosion, the chandeliers shook. There was smoke and flames coming out of the elevator shafts. It was awful. I evacuated as fast as I could. I was on Broadway when the first tower came down. My eyes couldn't believe it. Such a waste of life,' Sal said. <http://911digitalarchive.org/seiu/details/38>

South Tower lobby

Following the Port Authority's emergency plan, after the first jet hit the north tower, elevator mechanics from both towers reported to the fire safety desk in the south tower lobby for instructions from police or firefighters. About 60 mechanics had arrived in the south tower lobby and others were in radio contact when the second jet struck that building.

"We were standing there trying to count heads when the second plane hit (the south tower)," said Peter Niederau, ACE Elevator's supervisor of the modernization project. "Parts of the lobby and glass were coming down around us, so we all got out of the lobby as fast as we could." http://www.usatoday.com/news/sept11/2002-09-04-elevator-usat_x.htm

South Tower Lobby: gust from second plane impact blows NYPD officer out door

Death also seemed imminent for 37-year-old Carol Paukner, as gusts created after a second plane rammed into the World Trade Center complex blew her out an exit of the South Tower. Latching on to a door, the New York City police officer hung half in and half out of the exit as bodies went flying past her. With one hand, she grabbed onto the leg of another man who was still alive. He reached out with his hand and she pulled herself in. They huddled in the corner of a building black with smoke and dust.

They thought they were going to die. http://www.seldes.net/911/pressjournal_Sept2002.pdf

Beat partners Carol Paukner and Tracy Donahoo were assigned to the NYPD's Transit Division, District 2 in Lower Manhattan.

Donahoo was a rookie officer at the time. After the first plane hit, they responded to a call "for an unknown condition" only to find the "streets covered with debris" (p. 4). They helped direct people and vehicles in the chaos that ensued. Paukner told Donahoo where to meet her if they became separated, which they did. Shortly afterward Paukner was blown "into the glass partition" (p. 5) of a store then "through the exit" (p. 6), but she managed to find someone else who she held onto in order to protect both of them. She finally made it to safety, with all of this occurring before the first tower fell. Paukner tore her rotator cuff as well as her knee; her neck, foot, and eyes were injured and she developed a lung infection; everyone she knew who worked in that area was killed. <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=171611095942378>

South Tower Lobby

Mike Pecoraro and Arti made their way out of Tower One and went to Tower Two. They encountered a crowd of people standing outside the tower, not knowing what had happened. Apparently, they had witnessed a fireball come through the lobby after the second airplane had struck that tower, but they were entering directly from the subway underground and had as yet, no idea of what was happening. Mike and Arti told them all to leave and go home. <http://www.chiefengineer.org/article.cfm?seqnum1=1029>

South Tower Concourse

PAPD officer Will Jimeno: damage done to lower levels by flight 175 impact.

[Jimeno working at the PA Bus Terminal on 42nd St. got to WTC just before the 2nd plane hit]

"And, just then, it is like an earthquake when the plane hits the south building. ...when huge parts of the tower and shock waves come down into the plaza area, cracking all the cement. The whole concourse above us collapses. There are a lot of civilians all around, and I don't know what happens to them, but I think it has to be bad. I can see Liberty Street before me as I feel a ball of debris hit us. Now I see a huge fireball coming at us, and I yell, "Run! Run towards the freight elevator!" [Smith: The fire has come from the fuel that has poured down the elevator shafts.] Dennis Smith. Report From Ground Zero. New York: Viking Penguin, 2002. p. 114

Jimeno: Suddenly I hear a loud noise and look over to the sarge and say, "Hey, Sarge, is there a second plane coming?" And, just then, it is like an earthquake when the plane hits the south building. We are just about in the middle of the concourse, between the two buildings, just below and a little south of the big golden globe, when huge parts of the tower and shock waves come down into the plaza area, cracking all the cement. The whole concourse above us collapses. There are a lot of civilians all around, and I don't know what happens to them, but I think it has to be bad. I can see Liberty Street before me as I feel a ball of debris hit us. Now, I see a huge fireball coming at us, and I yell, "Run! Run towards the freight elevator!" [The fire has come from the fuel that has poured down the elevator shafts.] http://www.firehouse.com/news/2002/3/smith_ex.html

"Plunge just the start of nightmare" By Dennis Cauchon and Martha T. Moore, [USA Today](#)

Passenger elevator No. 13. South tower, 78th floor. 9:02 a.m. Alan Mann, 35, an executive vice president at Aon Corp., an insurance company, squeezed into an express elevator packed with 25 people evacuating the south tower. He was the last person in. The doors closed. The elevator descended normally for the first seconds of a ride to the ground floor that should have lasted 60 seconds. Then United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the south tower, tearing through the elevator machine room on the 81st floor. That cut most cables to the express elevators. Elevator No. 13 began a free fall from 900 feet above ground.

"Get on your knees!" somebody screamed. Everybody knelt. People prayed aloud. The elevator fell, banging against the sides of the shaft. As the plunging car neared the ground, the emergency brake grabbed onto the thinnest of nine elevator cables — the only one remaining — and the elevator jerked to a stop.

Mann found himself trapped in a corner of the elevator, lying on top of someone. Debris and dust filled his mouth. Other passengers screamed and moaned. He heard other elevators crashing nearby.

It was dark. A man unpacked his laptop computer and turned it on for light. Injured people begged others not to move because it caused them pain. He could see two Aon colleagues, Alan Friedlander and Donna Giordano.

"Alan, I'm hurt," Giordano sobbed.

"Donna, don't worry, we're going to get out of this thing," Mann said.

Then, somebody yelled, "Oh my God, fire!" Burning jet fuel shot flames into the car, burning Mann's neck. He gasped for breath.

I'm going to die the worst possible death, Mann thought. My wife is going to be a single mother.

Someone was praying, repeating, "In God's name, in God's name."

Mann told himself: Don't give up. He crawled over people — some dead, some alive — to the other side of the elevator. There, two men and a woman were trying to push aside a piece of metal outside the elevator where the doors once were; the metal was blocking the exit.

Mann helped rip off a piece of metal but cut his left hand badly. He stuck his head through a small hole near the elevator floor and tried to push himself through. He couldn't fit. He was 10 feet above the lobby floor but couldn't get out.

He pulled his head back inside the burning elevator and pushed a petite woman out the hole. The woman hit the floor hard but stood up. "Go get help! Go get help!" Mann yelled.

She stood there, dazed.

Mann put his feet into the hole and squeezed out feet first, crashing to the floor. He was barefoot and shirtless, his pants shredded.

The lobby was deserted. He walked through revolving doors and found four firefighters in the underground shopping mall. He brought them back to the elevator. "You need to help these people," he said. He fled the building and ended up in an ambulance.

Everybody else in the elevator died, including Friedlander and Giordano. Mann doesn't know what happened to the woman.

Mann had numerous injuries: burns, nerve damage to his arms and legs, a deep cut that limits use of his left hand. He's back at work now, but his 12-hour days are in the past. Mann spends more time with his wife and daughters.

"I got a second chance on life."

September 11, 2001: A World Trade Center Survivor's Account by Tilly (edited by Mike Austin)

Editor's note: This is a true, first-person account, one story of survival of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. It comes from one of our occasional RN posters, who uses the screen name of Tilly. She has understandably requested that her real name not be used. We decided to let Tilly tell the following story in her own words what occurred on that terrible Tuesday morning. We can better understand it has affected her, our nation, and the world, forever - we believe you'll be appreciative after reading it. We thank her for her generous permission to use her account, and think of those she mentions in it, as well as in our own

lives, who were so affected that day.

This article first ran a year ago on the site (September 11, 2003). However, we believe that many new RN visitors and members since then might have never read Tilly's story, as well as longtime members who have. In the former case, we hope you'll gain a stark and clear understanding of what some went through; for the latter, we hope that you'll appreciate returning to this reminder brings remembrance and awareness. We know it's lengthy, but we can think of no better way to commemorate September 11, 2001 here. We hope you'll understand why after reading it.

September 11, 2001: I started my daily commute routine from my apartment at 76th and Lexington in Manhattan's Upper East Side to my World Trade Center (WTC) Tower 2 office. Getting to the 77th Street/Lexington Avenue subway station around my usual 7:40 a.m., I found that the downtown local was running late, but I was happy to see my three buddies on the train. They had the same commute as I did (they worked in WTC 1), and they were often feeling the morning effects of a previous night's socializing; I enjoyed teasing them on the way to work about what a long day it was going to be. We had gotten into a conversation about college football one morning, and we had made plans to meet up that weekend with various friends to watch the kickoff of a new season. I bid them "later," after we made plans to meet up after work that day at the Sphere fountain in the WTC plaza for the commute home.

I got my daily cup of coffee at the Church Street Starbucks. Whenever the weather was as pretty as that day, I always walked across the Plaza level entering WTC 2 (the "South Tower") on the north mezzanine level entrance, and headed down one flight of escalators to the main lobby level. I took one of the three elevator banks in the lobby (each serving floors 3-43, 44-77, and 78-110 respectively). I took the second set, and then transferred to internal elevators to get to my office; the morning's delays caused me to arrive in my 59th floor office (in the center of the South Tower's west side), at 8:43 a.m. instead of my usual 8:30 a.m. (I glanced at my desk clock). I set my backpack down and with coffee in hand started towards my boss's office nearby. My co-worker and friend Karen, who was in early that morning (she usually got in at 9 a.m., but we commuted together that morning), had just turned on the morning radio news.

At that moment, a horrific boom resounded throughout the office, so loud that it reminded me of a supersonic jet screaming right next to the window, only 10 times louder. The building shook so severely that I had to grab the desk to keep my footing! Instantly, I spun around and ran into my boss' office to look out the window facing west into New Jersey. Stepping up on the air conditioning vent that ran along the floor's perimeter, I pressed my face and body against the window (in hindsight this was not the smartest move, but it gave me a perspective on how severe the situation was). I saw monumental amounts of debris blowing by and raining down everywhere: chunks of burning metal, papers, desks - and bodies.

I could not believe what I was seeing.

It was too much for any one person to filter. The entire West Side Highway, the roof of the Marriott Hotel directly below, and everything flying through the air, was on fire. I stood there for what seemed an eternally long time, fixated in shock and amazement as the cars on the West Side Highway blew up, one after another. It took me about two seconds to deduce that I needed to get out - immediately. Although we had a good evacuation procedure in place, I was not going to wait for it to be dictated to me. I grabbed my backpack, then a frightened Karen, and stressed in a loud, forceful manner laced with foul language (using everything in the book and then some!) that everyone needed to move now! I didn't know at that moment what had occurred, but I knew that we were all in grave trouble, and that our best course of action was to be as close to the ground as we could go, in case something occurred that could trap us in a place where rescue was impossible. I've never at all liked being up high, which I know might sound silly coming from someone who worked in one of the tallest buildings in the world, but all I could think of was Towering Inferno at that moment, like I had thought everyday I worked there. Karen had been through the 1993 WTC bombing, and she had told me in detail what had happened, which always had frightened me; ironically, we had just been talking about it the day before. But these latent fears had served me well; I really did think often about the worst case scenario. Any time I went to another floor, or out to run an errand, I always took my belongings with me just in case something might happen. I was always looking at clocks, because for some reason the time was important to me. Now it was real.

Still, like most of the WTC occupants, I didn't yet know what exactly had happened. My first thought was that one of those traffic or commuter helicopters flying around us had lost control and hit the building, as happened during the 70's at the Pan Am Building. It still wasn't yet clear that anything happened to the tower next to us from my viewing angle; at that moment, I thought that it was above me in my tower. All I knew was that I sure wasn't going to hang around to find out! I went straight for the emergency stairwell about 12 feet from my desk with Karen in tow. Starting at our 59th floor, we zipped down the stairwell two and three stairs at a time, while in my head I could hear my father's voice saying, "Just get the hell out - focus - worry about what happened when you get home." I tied my jacket around my waist and ripped my dress shirt off (I had on a T-shirt because the office was always so cold), tearing it in half to wrap around our hands as they slid down the railings, or over our faces if we came upon smoke. We saw no one until we reached the 52nd floor. Everyone was descending orderly but rapidly, joking among ourselves to keep our own fears under control, but to also calm those around us that were more obviously scared. I remember passing the 44th floor thinking after what seemed like going down endless flights of stairs "Oh Lord I'm just at 44!" When I reach the 42nd floor, the P.A. announced that a plane has struck Tower 1 and to remain calm (which remarkably, everyone was at this point). When we reached the 38th floor, the now controversial P.A. announcement was issued that we should either return to our floor or exit onto the floor where we were, but to stay in the building because the falling debris made it unsafe to be outside, and our South Tower was not yet secure. No one going down in the stairwell stopped, although I know that others in the building took this advice, which for many of them was a fatal decision. We descended on.

It took me exactly 17 minutes to get down 59 flights of stairs because eventually it turned out to be the time difference between the two planes hitting each tower. I exited the emergency stairwell into the 1st floor lobby center elevator vestibule servicing floors 3 through 43 about eight seconds before the second hijacked plane went through my Tower 2. I didn't think of it until later, but now as I recall, at this point I lost track of Karen.

What followed was unlike anything I have ever experienced, or could imagine experiencing; the only thing that comes close is the movie Die Hard. When that plane blew through upstairs the repercussions only took about 25 seconds, but it all seemed in slow motion to me, as if I was watching myself on a movie screen. **All of the oxygen was sucked out of the building and my lungs (like being in a vacuum).** I felt doomed because the turnstile exiting the elevator bank would not unlock for me to get out and run for the revolving doors leading out of the lobby and into the mall under the plaza level. I could not have known at that panic-filled moment, but that locked-up turnstile would save my life. Instead I'm thinking, "This is where I will die," **because I can hear an explosion roaring downward inside the building.** Yet somehow I looked over to see that the end turnstile wraps around a support beam forming about a two-square-foot space, but there is only about six inches to squeeze through between the end of the turnstile and wall beam.

Something inside me told me to get in there. I'm about 100 pounds soaking wet, so I pressed myself through and balled up facing the support beam with the steel barrier wrapped around my back giving me a little protected cubby hole.

This is when the explosion came.

It progressed down the building, breaking the windows as it went; the entire building was groaning, an unnatural, unearthly sound, much like a can squeezing, or cracking uncooked spaghetti. By the time it reached the lobby, the marble veneer was cracking and falling off the walls; the chandeliers shattered on the floors along with the plaster ceiling, and the force imploded in at about 50 mph, pulling metal, balled safety glass, and other material with it. The pipes were bursting over my head and dense materials were flying around me as if they were being pureed in a blender. In the next instant came a horrible noise and a flash of extreme heat and light blown directly over my head. I concluded later in the day that this was from the huge airplane fireball sent down the 78-110 elevator shaft that exploded out into the lobby, and blew around the walls and curled into the center vestibule where I was taking cover. The third and last explosion occurred when a huge chunk of burning wreckage fell to Liberty Street, which runs parallel along the south side of the South Tower, and crashed through the building into the lobby behind me, bringing metal, glass, marble and revolving doors with it. There had been four security men and some fleeing WTC workers behind me near those revolving doors; I realized that they were all taken out by either a huge chunk of the building exploding outwards or the tail end of the plane falling to the street. I now know that there were nine of us in the lobby that day when the plane hit, two NYPD officers on the 44-77 elevator side, and two others coming out of emergency stairwells on the 78-110 elevator side. **The two officers and I were the only ones who made it out alive.**

As the debris and dust settled, water started to rain down, **and black smoke began to roll through with the strong smell of jet fuel in what was left of a once beautiful lobby.** I jumped up, wedging myself out of my cubbyhole, and tried to crawl under the turnstiles and out for the revolving doors leading to the mall. I was covered in dust, glass, water and a variety of other stuff, trying to get to one of the 10 revolving doors in front of me with every bit of calm I could muster. It was not easy. I looked back at two bodies, then forward to notice a ladder perched in front of one revolving door. Used to reach flowers in planters above the doors, it was a startling sight, completely undisturbed, along with the flowers and planters, in an otherwise chaotic, collapsing, rubble-filled lobby. After crawling to the revolving doors leading into the underground mall, I went about 14 feet further and came to a NYFD firefighter at the mall doors, who was pulling the door from the mall side. I couldn't move those doors because of all the debris in the footwell and their weight, nor did I think fast enough to crawl through the openings where the glass had been. He reached his hand in and pulled me through the door by my jacket shoulder, and asked if I was okay. I thought to myself, "Thank God the cavalry is here, everything is going to be okay, if anyone can fix this the Fire Department can." Of course I didn't know the full scope of the situation at that moment and I don't think they did either. <http://www.righnation.us/blog/guest/index.php?id=P306>



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Conclusion

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I started writing this paper a few weeks ago, when it seemed that William Rodriguez was avoiding answering questions. He appeared on the JREF internet [forum](#) where I post regularly, made a few posts, then left in a huff when the questions got tough. He at first accepted, then backed out of, an invitation from Ron Wieck to appear with me on the NYC TV discussion show "Hardfire."

I wondered what might be behind his apparent evasiveness. I had never seen any of his speeches, and had read only a few articles about him. My impression was that Rodriguez's talks were mostly an account of his 9/11 experience with a small dash of naive conspiracy belief thrown in.

I was wrong. I had no idea of the amount of venomous ignorance that Rodriguez spews in the name of "truth," or the extent to which he plays up his "American hero" status while accusing Americans of the 9/11 mass murders. I didn't know about his association with the Holocaust denial crowd or about the misinformation he has spread in places where the U.S. is unpopular, and the effect that misinformation has had. I didn't know that he had converted to Islam. I didn't know that he had promised to interview Arturo Griffith, the operator of the #50 freight elevator, but had failed to do so. I didn't know that he hasn't bothered to read the detailed studies about the 9/11 attacks and the tower collapses, which he proclaims are lies. I didn't know that he was the kind of person who repeatedly misrepresents what he has said and done.

"As I asked questions and put things together, the whole thing changed from their side and also from mine." –William Rodriguez

This may be the most telling of Rodriguez's many contradictory statements. The evidence that Islamist jihadists planned and executed the 9/11 attacks is consistent, coherent, and overwhelming. That has never changed. The evidence that the Twin Towers were brought down by damage and fires caused by the airliners that hit them is consistent, coherent, and overwhelming. That has never changed.

On the other hand, Rodriguez's story is inconsistent, incoherent, often demonstrably false, and ever-changing. That's what happens when anger and political prejudice replace dispassionate assessment of facts.

This paper is long and detailed because I want William Rodriguez and other 9/11 conspiracists to know that they aren't just a little bit misguided. They are outrageously, horribly wrong, and an overwhelming amount of evidence to prove them wrong can be found by anyone, with minimal effort. All that's required is caring about the truth.

But the truth is inconvenient to the fantasists of the 9/11 "Truth Movement," the most poorly-named entity that I can imagine. Deliberate ignorance is bad at any time. It is especially bad when a hero of 9/11 says he is fighting for the truth, but continually goes out of his way to avoid and deny it.

Mr. Rodriguez, your recent actions are the opposite of heroic. They are cowardly and unethical, and have put you in the company of many disreputable people. I hope that you will choose to become informed about your claims. I'm more than willing to help. As I said on the first page of this document, I think you have much to offer the world, and I think you have the tools to be an effective activist for causes that are based on reality. It's your move. Will you do the right thing?

–Mark Roberts

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